

THE
WEST INDIA MERCHANT.

BEING A
SERIES OF PAPERS

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PRINTED UNDER THAT SIGNATURE

IN THE
LONDON EVENING POST:

WITH
CORRECTIONS AND NOTES.
BY THE AUTHOR:

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CORRECTIONS AND NOTES

BY THE AUTHOR.

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EDITOR TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER,

WE have seen the beginning of a great *Revolution*, the *Revolt of thirteen noble Provinces*; but we have not yet seen the end of it: whatever, or whenever, that shall be, we, in the interim, think it our *professional* duty, independant of our interests, to record, for the instruction or amusement of Posterity, all Facts, Sentiments and Opinions, concerning this great and important Transaction, that come within our knowledge and power; and more especially such documents, as being founded on general principles of sound policy, seem to be the genuine productions of sober men, untainted by factions. And although the *Grandeess*, of the present age in our Nation, seem to have profited little by the Histories of the *Revolutions of Switzerland*, of the *Netherlands*, and of our own Country, in the three last centuries; being perhaps more delighted with perusing the Narratives and Memoirs of the *Heroic Usurpations* of the Kings of *Denmark* and *Sweden*, and of other Monarchs, over those *legal Rights* and *Immunities* of their Fellow Creatures, which, they were *chosen*, and *sworn*, to *defend*; we do not,

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2 *The* EDITOR *to the* READER.

however, on that account, relax our honest endeavours for the improvement of the political Virtue and Morals of Mankind.

The giddy and unthinking of the present age, not sufficiently warned or intimidated by the apprehension of Maladies, which are described, in many grave and learned Authors, to be the certain consequences of their debauched Lives, suffer themselves to be fatally convinced by sad Experience : Yet their negligence does not prevent the medical Philosopher from continuing to communicate his farther Discoveries from repeated dissections of diseased bodies.

In like manner, we go on, collecting every thing that may contribute to shew posterity, what were the general sentiments of private, as well as of public persons, during the progress of this great Revolution. To this end, we have, in this Volume, collected, from the scattered pages of the London Evening Post, the Sentiments and Opinions of *the West India Merchant*, his Friends and Correspondents, on this interesting Subject, agreeable to the desire expressed in his last Number.

FAREWELL.

THE

T H E
WEST INDIA MERCHANT.

T A K E N F R O M T H E
L O N D O N E V E N I N G P O S T O F J A N U A R Y , 1 7 7 6 .
N U M B E R I .

S I R,

HAVING spent the greatest part of my life in a compting-house, I never troubled my head much about the political disputes between ministers and anti-ministers, till this last great topic concerning America compelled me to take notice of it, as it broke into my compting-house, and gave a shock, through the whole circle of my dealings, to that little property which I have been all my life labouring for.

The late extension of the West-India trade in the Ceded Islands, appeared to me in so advantageous a light, that about five years ago I quitted another branch of business, and adventured my whole capital, for consignments, among the new planters.

The confident language of the Ministry last year, who assured us that our disputes with North-America would be settled in a few months, kept me tolerably easy, tho', impressions made on me by the rational doubts and forebodings of many of our
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body, as expressed in our petitions * to Parliament, obliged me to think seriously and steadily on the subject, though to my shame, I own, I did not sign those petitions.

Unhappily, every thing asserted by the Ministry has been falsified by events, which have proved the forebodings of the planters to be too true. But (as I have said above) having confined my attention principally to the perfect understanding of *my own business*, I generally concluded that men, who set themselves up for Ministers of State, would, in like manner, apply themselves studiously to be masters of *their trade*, and consequently that their schemes and plans would be equitable, rational, practicable, and so probable for their execution, that the odds of success should always be greatly in their favour. The whole train of events for some years past, and the miserable state to which our trade and national prosperity are now reduced, convince me of the contrary in every point.

My correspondents in Grenada, Tobago, St. Vincent's, and Dominica (whose calculations of great crops have hitherto so far deceived both themselves and me, that I have advanced both in money and credit by much too far, without the returns I

* See the account of the Petition in Almon's Parliamentary Register, vol. I. pages 131 and 327, and in Remembrancer, vol. II. p. 102.

had

had reason to expect) now call upon me to send them out provisions and lumber from Europe, or they must inevitably be ruined for want of these supplies, which hitherto they had at a moderate price from North-America, in exchange for their rum, which now, since the loss of that market, will lie as a dead stock upon their hands. To make such a farther advance as this demand requires, while things are more likely to grow worse than better, has thrown me into such a perplexity, that I know not how I can proceed, or what to do. If I deny the request, I ruin my correspondents, and perhaps lose my capital. If I comply with it, I entangle myself still further, perhaps to be more compleatly ruined at last. The agitation of my mind, under this dilemma, last night, produced the following dream:

“ I thought, that having adventured so much of my property in the new Islands, I had determined to make a voyage there, to be at hand to levy on the effects or estates of my correspondents, as prudence or necessity might direct me, but in my passage was taken by a North American privateer, in view of a squadron of French and Spanish men of war, and was carried to Philadelphia, where I heard a treaty was just concluded with France, Spain, and Prussia; that the Spaniards had proposed to have Jamaica in exchange for the Island of
Porto

Porto Rico ; but the Congress insisted, that (as they had been obliged to assert their independence in opposition to a barbarous, ministerial faction, which not only endeavoured to trample on their rights, natural and civil, but in the execution renounced the laws of humanity) it would ill become them to barter away the possessions of their brethren in Jamaica, without their own consent. But if the planters of Jamaica, on being consulted, could be convinced that the Island of Porto Rico would afford them estates equivalent to what they now possessed, and sufficiently indemnify them for the charge of removal, and would on that account consent to the proposed exchange ; they would then accommodate the Spaniards in this proposition, as it would bring their brethren somewhat nearer to them. But as this was not then in their power, they agreed on an alternative, that Porto Rico should be exchanged for Jamaica or Pensacola, at the option of the Congress, who knew, at all events, what happiness they could confer on the inhabitants of the latter, by removing them from their present misery. France had St. Vincent's, Grenada, and Dominica ; and Prussia had Tobago, securing to the inhabitants of these four islands their property, and the continuation of their present laws

laws and forms of government ; but the dominion of Jamaica, the old Leeward Islands, and Barbadoes, with rights of having representatives in the General Congress, was guarantied by these three powers to the United Colonies. — Lord have mercy upon me, and Old England, said I, — must I now look to France and Prussia for my property in the Ceded Islands !” — And saying this, I thought I fell as into a swoon, and hit my head against a table, the shock of which awaked me.

Now, Sir, though I was rejoiced to find this was only a dream, yet by reflecting upon it, and considering what I should do, if such a reverie should become real, my perplexity was greater than before : wherefore I resolved to send this narrative to you, hoping you will favour me with a corner of your paper as an occasional correspondent, for at present my thoughts are in such a crowded confusion, that I cannot give them orderly utterance. I also wish for the assistance and advice of my brethren and associates, planters and merchants ; for as those who are combined to injure us, must either be ignorant fools, or rogues, I hope it is not absolutely out of the power of honest and wise men to form such a combination, as may legally and equitably oppose them to effect.

NUM.

NUMBER II.

IT is reported, I cannot say on what authority, that the Congress has resolved to open a trade to and with all the world, except Great-Britain and Ireland, by which I understand they would relax their former resolution in favour of the Sugar Islands.

If this should be true, what an unhappy consequence must the late hasty measure, the Prohibitory Act, have? For by cutting off all communication and commerce between our Sugar Islands and the United Colonies, it will prevent them from receiving those supplies for their subsistence, which the humanity of the United Colonies would have given, and which this country cannot give effectually, and I fear will not even grant what they can.

Hitherto our Sugar Islands have been supplied with corn, biscuit, cattle, salted provisions, and principally salt fish, (which last is the chief support of the labouring class) and also with lumber, under which denomination is comprehended all sorts of timber, planks, boards, &c. for maintaining their buildings, and for making the casks, without which they could not save or convey their produce to market. And all these necessities they paid for conveniently by barter; that is, with a part of their

their products, and chiefly with rum ; for being by the several navigation acts confined to a narrow channel of domestic trade, and most of the wealthy planters residing in England, their spendings here, together with the freight, the cost of cloathing, furniture, iron tools, and sundry other stores and implements sent from Great-Britain, generally exhaust the value of all the rest of their products, so that little or no money in gold or silver specie, is returned to the islands from hence, and consequently the North-American commerce (by supplying what this country could not) was not only indispensibly necessary for the existence of the West-India Colonies as sugar plantations, but also their traders, by accepting payments in rum, instead of cash, were serving the interest of Great-Britain, and of the Sugar Islands, in a double capacity.

In consideration of the above-mentioned circumstances, I find it is now the unanimous opinion of our body, that to whatever part of the world we are to look for supplying the Sugar Islands with lumber and provisions, there is a preliminary step to be taken, which is to find a market for that part of the rum (upwards of fifty thousand puncheons) which hitherto was taken by North-America, in exchange for lumber and provisions, without which expe-

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dient the planters are in no condition to pay for them ; for, as in the islands, their produce, sugar, or rum, is their only money ; and rum was a species sufficient to pay for the afore said supplies, as purchased of the North Americans, it is clear, that after the North-American commerce is cut off, if that money (rum) cannot be made to pass in exchange elsewhere, they cannot purchase these supplies at all.

And therefore, if the wisdom of administration, or of Parliament, or of the power that manages that wisdom, does not find them as certain, and as good a market for their rum, as they have deprived them of in North-America, there can be no doubt, but that all the smaller estates must cease to be sugar plantations, to the ruin, not only of nineteen in twenty of the planters (for whom as a species of foreigners, it must be confessed we have very little regard) but also to ourselves, and our trade here at home, to a degree that will shake both the Exchange and the Exchequer.

P. S. My nephew, Welchcotton (whose father was happy enough to make his fortune, and retire from business before the commencement of the present disorder in the State) being lately married, wrote to me to look out for a decent house to be purchased for him, in the new buildings at the West end of the town. But I advised

wis'd him to content himself for a while with lodgings, as I had reason to think he may have great choice, a year or two hence, at fifty per cent. below the present rate. He has been prudent enough to listen to my advice, and in his answer has sent me the following epigram, in the *laconic* style of the London Gazette, made by the curate of his parish, and which I think is not amiss :

ONE *Hannibal* from *Carthage* pass'd the *Alps*,
And put the Romans in a mighty pother ;

ONE ARNOLD pass'd the *wilderness of Scalps*,
And scar'd *Quebec* !--where find we *such another*?

N U M B E R I I I .

Mr. Printer,

I SHALL trouble you no further at present, than to communicate to you the following letter from a correspondent. I am, &c.

The West India Merchant.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R, Hereford, Jan. 19, 1776.

I dined yesterday at the house of a worthy gentleman, who, for the sake of good neighbourhood, endeavours, in the midst of our county bustle *, to make his house

* A contested Election.

a neutral port, for such of his friends as can calmly communicate over turkey and chine, and a chearful glaſs, without drawing their daggers for Whig or Tory.

We had three Members of Parliament at table, and a gentleman from Bristol having brought the London papers, ſome one after dinner taking notice of your *dream*, brought on the following converſation, which I addreſs to you, as I think it throws ſome light on your ſubject.

Bristol Gentleman.—It is very unlucky that the Miniſters did not inform themſelves more certainly of the ſtate and circumſtances of the *Sugar Colonies* (who had no ſhare in the North-American delinquency) before they inflicted on them the heavy puniſhment of cutting them off from their *daily bread*, which, I underſtand from our merchants, will be the probable effect of the late Prohibitory Act, as it not only denies them the North-American ſupply, but will prevent their getting money to buy it elſewhere.

First Member.—Sir, I can aſſure you, if the Miniſtry and the Houſe had not full information of the ſtate and circumſtances of the Weſt-India Colonies, it can only be accounted for, that their eyes were not to ſee, nor their ears to hear. The Weſt-India petition preſented laſt ſeſſion, and their evidence in ſupport of it, which have ſince

since been printed, were laid before the House. The like was repeated this year, on which occasion their council, after stating the imminent danger they were in, of being reduced to *famine* for want of their accustomed supplies, which could only be had effectually from North-America, observed, that there were circumstances of extreme necessity, under which mankind could no longer be contained within the bounds of ordinary laws; that in such distress, self-preservation became the first law in nature, and superseded all others, and therefore he intreated the Honourable House would well consider, whether the operation of the bill then before them, if passed into a law, might not eventually compel five hundred thousand subjects now loyal, to join in the North-American association.

Second Member.—Pshaw! damn 'em, I know nothing of *this* session, as it begun in the shooting season; but I remember very well, what we thought of their petition last year; we determined to give 'em a hearing for form sake, but not till after we had settled how the business should go; for, zounds, we know it was all a made-up thing, a humbug;—there was two or three formal fellows, with all their evidence writ down, like a Presbyterian catechism in question and answer;—so, I was convinced, as Mr. — hinted to me, if this
was

was all true, they didn't need to write it down so; for, if any one asks me how many hunters I have, I can easily tell them without going to book; nay more, when the pack's out, I can call every dog by his name;—so, after staying awhile to see if it would produce any fun, I found it damned dull, and went off to Pall-mall.

First Member.—Mr. — gives a pretty exact account of the manner the evidence was attended to. The gentlemen who gave it, and the manager employed by the planters and merchants, were not giddy boys, and their formality was a necessary compliance with the rules of the House, which, however it may indulge indecency in its own behaviour, expects to see great formality at its bar. Their evidence was written for the sake of accuracy, and was deliberately collected, compared, and carefully examined, in several previous meetings of the most experienced and intelligent planters, in order to give such only as would stand the strictest scrutiny. Many months, and many events have passed, since that evidence was given in, which far from impeaching, have unhappily strengthened its authority; so that in their last petition presented a few weeks ago, they referred the House again to the aforesaid uncontested evidence, which was accordingly read from
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the Journals, and was attended to, nearly as before.

Third Member.—Aye, aye, it signifies nothink at all what they says upon the matter;—I'm sure (and I shall never alter my mind) we're right;—these rebellous *Eme-ricans* must be conquered—and must be taxed too—why should we pay for they?—They have cost us a world o'money, and never brought us any thing but trouble and vexation.—Come, here goes, I'll bumper my toast, for I do say my Lord North is the best and the most wisest Minister this country, or any country in the world, I believes, ever had.—I folly's him;—he knows my mind, and I knows hiz'n, and so I minds he,—and I'm never mistaken; for my way is, when any thing is going an, I looks up to the *Trizury Binch*; so then, according as how as I sees they looks and behaves theirselves, I knows exactly, without being told any more, what they thinks of it, and how I shall take the matter myself.

Bristol Gentleman.—Well but, Sir, do you never give yourself the trouble of examining and considering the subject itself, on which you are to decide by your vote?

Third Member.—Oh, yes, that I've done in this case long ago.—I'm quite sartin that we are to tax the *West-Indies*, as well as the *West of England*.

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Bristol Gentleman.—You mean the *North-Americans*, I suppose, Sir.

Third Member.—Why, you knows, its all the same thing :—*North-America, Binnagal, Virginny, Jemaiky*, is all in the *Indies*, only the sea folks that loves to box the compass, calls things North and East and West, as if it wasn't better to say *Piccadilly* and *Whitechapel*, than the East and West end of the town ; and that makes it so puzzling to understand and to remember the names, and to know where all these *outlandish Colonies* are : but this I'm quite fartin of, they ne'er brought us any good, nothing but charges ever since we had 'em.—I knows *Old England* very well, and if all *the rest* was drowned in the sea, I'm fartin it would be much more better for us.

Bristol Gentleman.—But how do you reconcile it to *equity*, to tax a people who have no *Representatives* among you ?

Third Member.—*Representatives* ! -- Why ha'n't we passed resolutions, that we does represent 'em, and hasn't the *Declarity Act* settled the right and the power, and all that ?—What dost talk of *equity* for ? Ha'n't we sent over the fleet and the army to settle every thing—we represents 'em all, every one on 'em, that's sure !

First Member.—I protest, I cannot help fairly acknowledging, that I do not represent them ; for I was neither elected, nor
returned

returned by any of them.—I cannot conceive how my friend here, that does not so much as know what part of the world they are in, should fancy himself their Representative.

Third Member. — Pho ! I knows well enough in the main ; but as I never made the *tower of Europe*, I can't be so exact as you :—But the *Continental Congress*, to be sure, is in the *continent*, where the *continental wars* are always the plague of us ; the *North Colonies* are partly in *Germany*, where *Hanover* is, and partly in *France* ; and the *West-Indies* is partly in *Spain*.—We was dam fools for taking 'em from the French and Spaniards (all along of that old fellow *Pitt*) and I wish with all my heart they had them, and *Hanover* too, back again ; they brought us nothing but mischief and expences, as all *continintal kinexions* does.

Bristol Gentleman.—Have you delivered your sentiments in the House, Sir, on this subject ?

Second Member.—No, demme, he never speaks further than *aye* or *no* ; he's wiser than some other folks in that.—I spouted away once or twice, but it didn't signify much, though my Lord North spoke to me very kindly upon it.—I told them where they might get *lumber* enough, demme !—I had a meaning ; that I had

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Third

Third Member.—Aye, aye, you spouts away finely ; but I believe I gets as much for my silence, as you does for your spechifying. The main thing is only to know which is the right side o' the question ;—that's all—and that I'm never out in ;—so that, I thinks all spouting is only los of time ; and if I was Lord North, as soon as I had told 'em my mind, I'd make *Old Perriwig* pop the question directly, and then I'm sure and sartin we might go to dinner every day at four o'clock, and have all the rest of the evening to ourselves, instead of sitting there to hear nonsense till midnight."——

A summons from the ladies called us to the drawing-room, and put an end to this agreeable and instructive conversation.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

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NUM.

NUMBER IV.

Mr. Miller,

WHILE trade flourished, I felt so much content in the transactions of my own compting-house, that I would not have exchanged my situation for a seat at the best board round Whitehall; and when, as an independent merchant, who had no political connection, either with administration or opposition, I invited a correspondence through the medium of your paper, it was with the honest view of opening the eyes and the understandings of my countrymen on the present important situation of our affairs; therefore I think myself bound to lay the letters of my correspondents simply before you, even though they should, like the following one, give me an ungrateful rub, for my candidly confessing, that by the ruinous state of our trade, I was become woefully wiser this year than I was the last.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Jan. 25, 1776.

I WAS present some days ago at a long and warm debate; it was about the propriety of executing the *Perreaus*. One of the company observing to a gentleman, who

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had

had been silent in the dispute, that opinions were so much divided upon the subject, as to tempt him to believe it would have no end, received this dry answer: "Sir, it will end when the wind changes to the West."

My business, Sir, is not with the unhappy brothers, it is with the sarcastic remark. Is it true then, that men are thus to be moved with the deaths of two individuals, while they seem insensible to the fate of the British empire? Is it that the event of the moment, the object before our eyes, is therefore the most important? Be it so. But the wind will change to the West, and add this accidental consequence to the American quarrel. In the mean time, let it be seriously considered by those who are not carried away by the current topic of the day, whether any thing new be necessary to teach us to know its magnitude. Is it material, whether the next accounts across the Atlantic inform us, that Boston has surrendered, or that the garrison still maintain their post? Whether Quebec has opened its gates, or is waiting to be forced? It is still less decisive, although more places shall have been cannonaded, or ships of war obliged to retire from guns judiciously planted. What if a noble Governor should boast of fresh exploits, or should

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no longer find on the rivers of his province, the safety for which he left the land? Tidings like these may serve to set conversation afloat; enough has happened already to determine the judgment of a meditating mind. Enough has happened already in your particular branch of trade, to give you a just alarm, notwithstanding your original placid acquiescence with the ministerial measures. I trust you will now approve the West-India petition, and the consequent proceedings. To that fund of information I refer you; and you will do well to propagate the knowledge amongst your friends, nor leave them to learn it, like yourself, by the approach of misfortunes. I must however remind you of one mischief, because it is not specifically pointed out in those proceedings, although it was to be inferred. This mischief is the late rise in the premium of insurance. The increase is four per cent. upon the Jamaica ships, and two per cent. upon those of the other islands. It is calculated that four millions of property will be liable in the course of the next summer to this premium, or to the risk. The amount may be stated at one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. Be not startled at the sum. It is but a mere trifle in the estimate of the losses which ultimately reach the merchant.

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I cannot think of my share of them, without the most lively resentment.

I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

A WEST INDIA COLONIST.

What my correspondent observes concerning insurance is very true, and I wish it may be no worse; but he flatters us (Old Englishmen) too much, by supposing that the wind changing to the west, will contribute to awaken compassionate feelings for our fellow-subjects in the colonies. — *Out of sight out of mind!*—Three millions of the English race, at three or four thousand miles distance, are not equivalent in the balance of our affections, to two or three *felons* that we have seen and *gambled* with, and who have given *routs* in the capital.—Our *fellow subjects* did I say?—that was a mistake--I mean OUR SUBJECTS; for America belongs to *us*, and *we* govern them; consequently the man of property in America, according to our present maxim of government, is politically inferior to the lowest pot-walloper in Great Britain, and therefore cannot be his *fellow-subject*. I beg pardon of my countrymen for slipping into the error, but I hope this clear explanation will apologize for having inadvertently levelled them with their *inferiors*.

But

But to return to my correspondent : I say, notwithstanding it is natural *he*, as a *planter*, should be disturbed, that so great an expence as 120,000 l. should now fall on him and his brethren, to insure their property this year against captures ; yet the under-writers in the Alley, into whose hands this 120,000 l. must (in the first instance) fall, will not think it an ill wind that sets their mills to work ; though, at the same time, I am persuaded, there is not a man among them, that does not heartily wish this domestic war were changed for any foreign one. I am also convinced, the owners of transport vessels detest the prosecution of this unprincipled war ; but their natural trade being destroyed by the late acts of state, compels them to work for the wages of iniquity. Every honest man in business endeavours to advance his fortune by the fairest means in his power. The soldier and the sailor would rather embowel a stranger than their countryman ; but preferment and prize-money are allurements not to be withstood. Moreover, where we see the *heads* of government hurrying on this *war* for *plunder* ; confessing they are *too poor* to be *honest* ; pleading *necessity* instead of *justice*,

O ! *cives, cives, quærenda pecunia primum est, virtus, post nummos !*

We'll

We'll fleece and destroy these rebels first,
and consider the equity of our proceeding
hereafter !

Let us not cast the blame on the lower
ranks of men, who customarily think
themselves justified by following the orders
and examples of their superiors ; for,

Regis ad exemplum, totus componitur orbis.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R V.

Mr. Miller,

I SHALL only trouble you at present
with the letter of an important corre-
spondent, long enough, I believe, to oc-
cupy the space you are pleased to allow.

The West-India Merchant.

TO the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

THOUGH I hold an office under the
Crown, which obliges me to give admini-
stration my vote and assistance in Parlia-
ment, I am not so blind to the permanent
interest of my family, as not to know that
one thousand a year of my estate is more
valuable, and of more concern to me and
mine, than a temporary place or pension
of double that sum ; yet, while things
were

were going on only in the ordinary way, and that a certain moderate part of the monies levied on the public, was to be *shared* annually among the *King's friends*, I thought I might gratify myself in raising my personal consequence, by purchasing a seat in Parliament, where my talents being thought worthy of the minister's notice, I thought also I might as well indemnify myself, by receiving *wages* for my *service*, like many others of my acquaintance, my superiors in rank and fortune.

But I own I am now alarmed, and if gentlemen in your way have as just grounds for their forebodings as I begin to suspect, I fear administration will not long be in circumstances to pay our wages, nor my farmers be able to continue their present rents. I am sensible the multitude of people employed in manufactures and trade (as the consumers of provisions) have kept the price of corn and cattle so brisk for many years past, as to enable us to raise the rents of our farms considerably. I am also sensible so many traders and manufacturers could not have found employment or maintenance, if it were not by supplying cloathing, and sundry other goods, to many millions of people, colonists, savages, and slaves, in North America and the West-Indies. And I am also thoroughly sensible, the present appearance of

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business

business in trade, principally owing to the bustle necessarily made in supporting and supplying our great armament by land and sea, may aptly be compared to the industrious hurry of a family, strenuously occupied in throwing their goods out of doors and windows, after setting their house on fire in a drunken frolic, not one of them being yet sober enough to think of throwing water on the flame.

Now, Sir, taking this view of our situation, I have calmly looked over the North-American and West-India merchants petitions, and the evidences as published and summed up by Mr. Glover; and my opinion thereupon is, that if all your facts and observations are not demonstrably right, they are at least so far so, as to shew that our *commercial system*, heretofore so much approved of, is now counteracted, and in a fair way to be entirely overturned. But this being so apparent, I cannot doubt its being as obvious to those in administration as it is to me; and therefore in justice to the high opinion I have of their abilities, I suppose they find inconveniencies, and have strong reasons to think we may be carrying the commercial system too far; and that the *present measures*, otherwise *unaccountable*, are adopted and pursued, in order to keep the frame of our government (though perhaps within a smaller extent

extent of territory) more strictly in the *monarchial* or *despotic* regal form, under which it cannot permit so free a scope to commerce, as when it verges towards the freedom of a common-wealth.

To make this clear, let me observe to you, that *pure monarchy* is exactly represented in the constitution of a modern royal army, in which the *despotic* nature, tho' seemingly softened to the officers, by their respective shares of power and command distributed through all the ranks in subordination, from the General down to the Corporal; yet, upon the whole, it is nevertheless *despotism*. The common soldiers, who make the great bulk of this military nation, are absolute slaves, life and fortune at the will of their imperial commander; and the officers, the temporary creatures and instruments of his imperial will, at all times liable to be degraded or exterminated. If acquisitions are made by this despotic army, they are the acquisitions of the Prince, the officers and soldiers having no share in the profits of their labours, but as they may casually be gratified under his indulgent or capricious bounty.

On the other hand, the *regal common-wealth*, more favourable to *commerce*, resembles an army composed by a confederacy of people, or of nations, who have

previously settled their rights and privileges by *fixed laws*, under which they elect their commanders and subordinate officers, and by which their shares and proportions in all public acquisitions are regulated and ascertained, as well as their peculiar property absolutely secured to individuals in all private concerns; and lastly, to insure all this from fraud or surprise, the power of legislation is solely vested in the majority of the community. A prince, or commander of such an army or nation, as well as his nobles or subordinate officers, are hereby so much *curbed by laws*, that they cannot have such offensive and dangerous sway and command, as men of elevated rank are too apt to aspire after. And moreover, the means of acquiring wealth is left so open to the inferior orders, that in riches and splendor they may come to rival their superiors in rank, and, from these circumstances, to contract such notions of independency, as make them very *indocile* and untractable under wanton and capricious rulers, and consequently makes the government of them, unless it be legal and rational, very difficult and uneasy to the pride of the superior orders, who, therefore, in a *regal common-wealth*, must on all occasions be *pinned down* to a strict conformity to the *known laws*; from which, in the
despotic

despotic or pure monarchial system, they are entirely or occasionally absolved.

My birth and fortune have placed me in the middle rank of gentlemen of landed property. I am possessed of the same mansion and manors that have been in my family since the reign of Edward VI. with an accession of about one-fourth part more by my grandmother's estate; but my father found it necessary to pull down one wing of the house, and I have taken away the other, and still find what remains too large for my fortune, notwithstanding the additional income of my employment; and what will perhaps appear paradoxical, my grandfather, like his predecessors, kept such hospitality, that great as the house was before my father and myself reduced it, it was so much too small for the guests, that single gentlemen always lay two in a bed, and generally with two beds in a room for all young people.

A neighbour of mine, who is so old as to remember my grandfather, a gentleman of uncommon good understanding, has continued, as far as he could, the ancient manner of living, by a constant residence at his country-seat, never having had any other than a temporary lodging when business called him to London; and yet he tells me, he has found it frequently necessary, for fifty years past, to retrench greatly in his hospi-

hospitality. And whilst in conversation with him lately, I was suggesting the injury we had suffered by an excessive commerce, which, by making money too cheap, had introduced luxury, made all things unnaturally dear, and so forth, he stopped me short, "My dear friend, you mistake the shadow for the substance; if the dearness of things was owing to that cause only, the augmentation of our rents would keep pace with all such advances, and still enable us to live as well as our ancestors; but I, who have only my old coach, my old fashioned cookery and servants, and the produce of my own demesnes or homestead, for bread, meat, beer, garden stuff, horse feed, &c. have been forced to make new arrangements in my œconomy, to enable me to bear every additional tax which has been laid upon us, to pay the interests of debts accumulated by the squandering of a succession of corrupt Ministers. I have no patience with the pert ignorance of those, who, endeavouring to ridicule the writers against encreasing the national debt," say, 'These
 ' wise calculators prophesied forty years
 ' ago, the nation would be undone when
 ' it should come to owe a hundred millions;
 ' but now, we have passed that sum
 ' by near half, and are not ruined yet.' If these silly reasoners suppose we are not to be considered as ruined, till we are all
 starved

starved to death, and the land seized by our foreign creditors, we certainly are not yet arrived at that mark. But if they will admit, that a man fallen from affluence to a narrow subsistence is ruined, or comparatively so, such is now the state of this country, and such is mine in particular. I have the estate of my ancestors entire, it consists of two thousand acres, I don't owe a shilling, except my share of the public debt, which by acts of Parliament is eventually fastened on my land ; my homestead is the same as in my grandfather's time, about two hundred acres ; the rental of the remainder is now double to what it was in the reign of Charles II. but in my grandfather's time the number of mouths fed in the house was never less than forty, besides about twenty labouring men, women, and children, in the gardens and homestead, on daily wages. The latter continue about the same number, but my inmates have been for twelve years past necessarily reduced to sixteen ; and I conclude, that as soon as you fund the debt, which your present wild project is contracting, I shall be obliged to strike off two more, if I live to see that day. Now, Sir, am not I, in comparison with my ancestor on this same estate, a poor and ruined man ? He lived in splendor, maintaining a household of between forty and fifty persons ;

sons ; and I, with the same land, and the rental doubled, can scarce maintain sixteen. Just so, I say, the nation is ruined ; for, by a similar decline, most of the old middling families, who were not assisted by the *plunder* of the public, have been obliged by this decay to part with their estates to Nabobs and army contractors, thinking their money placed in the funds would increase their income by a higher interest, and save them from land-tax, where, however, some of them have already lost a third part of their capitals. These *new men*, who are suddenly raised by *public plunder* from penury to affluence, may say the nation, as it appears to them, is in a flourishing condition ; but the old families, reduced almost to beggary, by the weight of taxes to support a corrupt system, unhappily feel it is to them a nation undone. My dear friend, it is not the *commerce* of the industrious trader, but the avarice and corruption of ministers and their tools,—Forgive me, I have perhaps gone too far ; you know I don't mean particulars."

Here the good old man stopped ; he saw I was moved, and indeed so I was, but without any resentment against him, for I knew his integrity and affection towards me. I felt for an instant a ray of humiliation and remorse, that almost determined
me

me to a change of conduct; but it lasted not long, for I dread the laugh of my companions; therefore I wish to see this in print, and how it will pass among them. If it strikes any one of them so as to operate a change, I promise to follow his *lead*; for *that* I can do, though I have not courage enough to be *singularly* in the *right*.

I'm, Sir, &c.

A KING'S FRIEND.

From the Cocoa-Tree, Pall-mall, Feb. 2.

N U M B E R VI.

S I R,

Feb. 7, 1776.

THE tartness you complain of in my former letter, had not the West-India Merchant either for its occasion or its object; on the contrary, I honour the man, who joins to the good sense of discovering his error, the courage of renouncing it. Impressed with this sentiment, I lay before you the following hints, in aid of your plan to open the eyes of the nation to the fatal consequences of the American quarrel.

Having called your attention to our West-India petition, as supported by Mr. Glover at the bar of the House of Commons, it is incumbent upon me to inform

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you,

you, that the friends of administration affect to speak lightly of it ; alledging, that the gloomy predictions of calamities to ensue, have not been justified by the event. Like Cæsar, they have said, " The Ides of March are come."—I might answer with the soothsayer, " True, Cæsar, but they are not past." I might recriminate upon the boast of laying America at the foot of the Minister, in the first campaign ; a boast, which vanishing into air, is now succeeded by another—that the army will maintain its post at Boston, maugre the utmost efforts of the Provincials.

*Quos,
Fallere et effugere est triumphus.*

To escape being conquered is the triumph of an English army under the present auspices, while a great province, the darling hope of government, is entirely wrested from them. I say entirely, because they hold Quebec, only as a man holds an eel, by the tail. But I will confine myself precisely to the point, and observe, that no date is particularly assigned to any of the predictions. Is it a proof then ; that ruinous consequences will never follow the pursuit of certain measures, because those consequences have not immediately taken place ? By the same argument, those gentlemen may as well claim immortality, or
that

that the power of their friends is to continue coëval with their wishes. I will not presume to fix a time for the full accomplishment of Mr. Glover's predictions. I will set no limits to the reign of this Ministry. But I will boldly prognosticate, that the same period which marks the accomplishment of the former, will determine the political existence of the latter. That the manufacturers have not yet suffered, if the fact be true, has been imputed to the co-operation of many causes. The Spaniards have returned to their old system of a Flota, to carry out goods to their Colonies for the consumption of three years. Hence, an immediate and great demand for manufactures all over Europe; and hence, a future cessation. Great-Britain must submit to the periodical stagnation, in proportion to the share she enjoys of the supply. The peace in the North and East of Europe, has restored the ancient channels of trade, and opened new channels throughout Turkey, Russia, and Poland. The extraordinary stock of goods laid in by the Americans, upon the eve of the non importation, produced an effect similar to the system of the Spanish Flota. A great value in goods for the American market, was sent out upon speculation, in the transports which carried the troops and the three Generals to Boston. The un-

common payments made to the American merchants, have found their way to the master manufacturers, and enable them to continue their workmen in employment. While his money lasts, or his credit sustains him, the master manufacturer proceeds in his usual course; because, if he once abandons it, he will find it difficult to be recovered. And this perseverance is wisdom. If he can hold out till the storm is blown over, he will find in the opportunity, of being prepared for the opening of the market, some compensation for the loss of time; and what is of greater import, he will be in a condition to go on with his trade as formerly. Thus the great wheel of commerce continues its revolutions; for some time after the power which originally gave and continued its motion, has ceased to operate.

Having allowed, for argument sake, that the manufacturers have hitherto been all in full employment, I will grant for a moment, that the same demands will subsist; and in consequence the same employment remains, notwithstanding the loss of the Colony trade. I maintain in such a case, that if the ancient harmony had been restored, the trade of the nation would have grown up by degrees to the full measure of the new demands combined with the old. The Colonies participating with the Mother

ther Country "in every state, whether of dejection or elevation ; in every conjuncture, whether adverse or prosperous," the whole empire would have attained a pitch of wealth and strength, and reputation for wisdom and justice, to which she can have no pretensions under the present circumstances.

In my last I took notice of the rise of insurance. I have since heard of meetings of masters of ships : I fear they are symptoms of a rise of freight. This, like the rise of insurance, is amongst the evils not predicted by Mr. Glover, but will be an addition to the black catalogue.

I have given you trouble enough for once. You will hear again from

Your fellow-sufferer, and humble servant,

A SUGAR COLONIST.

Feb. 9, 1776.

THE West-India Merchant is much obliged to this intelligent correspondent, for the compliment he pays to his good sense and courage in renouncing his errors ; but I must be candid enough to own, I did no more than follow the road of my interest, as soon as I received day-light enough to discover I had, in the darkness of my infatuated ignorance, been deluded into a mazy way by the false glare of the Minister's *magic lantern* ; and when I clearly saw the difference

difference between the right and the wrong, I thought it my duty, in humanity, to warn my fellow adventurers of their danger ; many indeed had led the way before me, and several have followed, but there are about one per cent. of our number, who are so pleased with *blindman's buff*, and the dancing figures of the *magic lantern*, that I fear they, together with their leaders, are too giddy to be reclaimed ; though, when I left them, they appeared to me to be very near a *precipice*.

Now, to descend from figurative to plain language, as I wish only for a *restoration of peace*, that the causes which interrupt my own, as well as the national trade, may be removed, I make it a rule not to füll my paper with invidious descriptions of particular men, much less with their names ; and not lusting after the loaves and fishes at Westminster, my desire is rather to see a happy change of *measures*, than a precarious one of *men* ; for to follow the idiom of the sacred text, I take more delight in the conversion of sinners, than in their condemnation. And as far as my conversation and correspondence reach, I would rather endeavour to persuade by general argument, than personally to irritate my antagonists by stinging reproaches, that often make them adhere, through resentment, to opinions, which, unprovoked, they might have

have yielded to fair reason. I am very sorry to see the over-heated zeal of some honest planter or merchant, has given in the Gazetteer of this day an erroneous and improper account of the great West-India meeting of the 7th instant. That meeting, though large, was conducted with great temper and regularity. The business of it was to give the last sanction to some propositions to be submitted to administration, for such partial relief as may be afforded to the West-Indies during the present unhappy civil war; which propositions having been deliberately considered, digested, and approved of, at several previous committees, and a former general meeting, were now finally confirmed. Some gentlemen, not well informed of the business of the day, which was confined to the consideration of a few particular heads, thought the whole field of the dispute with America was open to them, and was a proper subject for present argument; some as advocates for the conduct of the Ministry, and others on the popular side, each, as far as they were permitted to proceed, shewing forth abilities that would have done them honour in a higher assembly; but the impartiality and good sense of the Chairman, very politely recalled them, according to his duty, to the special business before them. The proposition concerning
bounties,

bounties, which had been thoroughly considered in the former meetings, as an expedient that would be ineffectual in the present case, having been moved again by a very respectable planter, merely for the sake of collecting the sense of able and experienced merchants on that head, was treated with decency, and finally put aside by the previous question.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R VII.

S I R,

Hampstead, Feb. 10, 1776.

W H I L E I was playing a rubber of whist t'other night at a club coffee-house near Covent-garden, where I am a new member, we were interrupted by the sudden arrival of several persons with noisy and angry exclamation in the outer room: "D—n *his Majesty*, a pusillanimous puppy!" says one.—"Aye, aye, its high time to put an end to such *iniquitous government!*" said another.—"He thinks, like other scoundrels, it is sufficient if it will last for his time, without any regard to his successors," said a third.—"The cowardly traitor to abandon a *party*, who had risked every thing to support the *plan!*" said a fourth.—"Aye" (says a fifth), and a *plan* so powerfully
"sup-

“ supported ! ” — Astonished at such bold words, we all laid down our cards, concluding some strange and sudden revolution had happened. The clamour continued :
 “ Who will lift his arm again in the cause
 “ of such a mock Monarch ? ” — “ Who
 “ will write another line, if the rabble are
 “ to be the judges of a man’s merit ? ” —
 “ To the devil, I say, with *King David*. ” — By this time the clamourers had entered the card room, and we were relieved from our astonishment, by finding they were some members of our club just returned from the final damnation of *The Blackamoor washed White*, which, with a great posse, they had been endeavouring to persuade the audience, under the influence of *club law*, to be diverted with and to applaud, contrary to their natural sense and inclinations. As we had laid down our cards, we were curious to hear some particulars of the action, and it was necessary to give these new comers time to evaporate, before we could expect the room to be quiet enough to go on with our whist ; so, as they dispersed among the different tables, one or two of them sitting down by our’s, a gentleman of our party, an American Royalist, who fled hither last year from the Tumults at New-York, asked one of them, that, by his dress, seemed to be a parson, “ whether he thought it was
 G “ possi-

“ possible to win people’s affections, to-
 “ wards any thing, by force of a cud-
 “ gel?”

Parson. “ Possible ! aye, certainly. How has all Europe supported the faith of our holy religion, but by the *argumentum baculinum*, the knife and the faggot. There are too many Deists and Atheists among us as it is ; but good coercive laws can still bring them to our *auditories* ; and what is more material, make them pay the *crators*, and look as if they were satisfied, or at least be afraid to own the contrary.”

Royalist. “ I must allow your argument, as applied to religion, has had a wonderful good effect, especially in saving appearances ; but unless you could compel people to a regular attendance at the theatres, they would hardly come voluntarily, in order to be diverted under the influence of your baculine argument. Things that are mere matters of taste, can never be recommended to people by force, but must be left entirely to their uncontrouled choice.

Parson. “ A hey day ! is that your doctrine, brother Yankee, what did you say when you came here last year ? Did not you recommend our sending over an army to reconcile your country-men to drink *taxed tea*, and to take a pleasure in trading with us, on our *dragoon terms*, and against
 their

their own inclinations? What! have you altered your opinion, my man?"

Royalist. "Altered my opinion! Why, why, you are always mixing serious things with jests. Matters of government are not to be compared with the farcical management of a playhouse. I wish to God I had never come here on this occasion, to be the dupe of insidious professions and satanical politics!" (Here another gentleman interfered, and said) "Forbear, forbear, Doctor, the parallel is not civil: Mr ——— has said enough to shew his candour, in owning his change of opinion; say no more of that matter, but tell us how your theatrical expedition has ended."

Parson. "Why, the *Green Room Cabinet*, notwithstanding all their *blustering*, that they would maintain their authority, and support their *White-washed Blackmoor*, for the purpose of *raising a revenue*; and notwithstanding a great posse of us promised to stand by them with our *lives and bludgeons*, yet, I say, the little *Monarch*, and his *efficient Council*, finding a more determined opposition than they expected, and that in the conflict between boxes and galleries, the *foundations of their empire* might be shaken, and the *fabric torn to pieces*, were not ashamed, after all their boasts, to abandon the project, and to make a *sneaking*, or, as they called it, a *prudent retreat*."

Royalist. "Thank you, Doctor, for this information: God grant the example may be of use to other *Kings*, and other *efficient Councils*! Come, let us finish the rubber; clubs are trumps; I have the honours in my own hand, and we are up."

There was something in this little bit of conversation that filled me with more sentiments than I know how to express; I thought of it all the way home, but my ideas being still too great for my little pen, I resolved to send it to you simply as it happened; and am, Sir, yours, &c."

A TOBACCONIST.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R, Bartlett's-Buildings, Feb. 15, 1776.

THOUGH I am of a profession, which, by having been often abused by men who have betrayed their trust, is in no good esteem, the profession itself was certainly never intended to be exercised by any other than men of the strictest honour and integrity. In plain English, Sir, I am an attorney; that is, a man legally qualified to act under the name, and (according to the best of his judgment) for the benefit of others. The Honourable House of Commons are constitutionally intended as attorneys for the freeholders, citizens, and burgesses

gesses of the nation ; and the King himself is no more than an attorney, to see to the execution of the laws, and to watch the general interest of the community within and without his kingdom or attorneyship, with directions, like all other attornies, to advise with counsel on every knotty point.

Now, it being very clear that the King, the Parliament, and myself, are all of one and the same profession, I think it very unjust, that the petty-fogging treachery, and fraudulent double dealing of any set of low rascals, should fix a general character of infamy on the whole profession, including the highest ranks in the nation, as if, in our capacity of attornies, we were all scoundrels.

This, Sir, by way of preface, to obviate the vulgar prejudice against my calling, and to engage you to receive me with a gentleman-like attention.

I think you set out in your first essay, by pleading in excuse for your meddling with politics, that the American war had broke into your compting-house. I have a similar excuse to make for myself, that it has broke into the hall of our inn, where I have been in peaceable commons these twenty years, till the conduct of those intrusted with the management of our finances provoked a *convention* of our *community* last term, when one of our brethren,

thren, in behalf of the whole, addressed the bench in a speech, which, not to take up more of your or my own time at present, I will send you in my next.

I am, &c.

AN ATTORNEY.

New Lloyd's, February 19, 1776.

THE strongest sentiment raised in me by the conversation related in the letter of my correspondent *The Tobacconist*, is that of joining most heartily in the last prayer of the Royalist, "That we may have wisdom to make a prudent and peaceable retreat, while it is yet time, and before our foundations are shaken, and our fair edifice is torn to pieces." And though I have had hitherto a horrid opinion of the card clubs at the West end of the town, I am inclined to relax a little in favour of one, where they can moralize, in the midst of their play, and even lay down their cards, when they think the state is in danger.

My friend the attorney comes forward with so honest a countenance, I cannot doubt his integrity, and therefore shall thank him for any communication that may assist a righteous cause.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M.

NUMBER VIII.

S I R,

Feb. 18, 1776.

I Promised you should hear from me again. I make haste to perform my promise.

Upon the debate in the House of Lords in the last session, when the Marquis of Rockingham presented our West-India, and the North-American petitions, a certain Lord took this line: He said, that he believed the apprehensions of the petitioners were well founded; that he had no doubts but that the West-Indies would suffer exceedingly in the contest. It was possible, he added, that Great-Britain, with all her efforts, might not succeed. Notwithstanding, he thought, the West-Indian and the North-American commerce, with their relative advantages to this country, ought all to be sacrificed, and the risk of a miscarriage endured, rather than restore America to her situation at the conclusion of the last war, which was all she required.

In this speech there appears a spirit of bravery differing only in a single circumstance from that of the Roman Curtius. The ancient hero devoted to destruction himself, his horse, and his armour. History tells us he succeeded, and the gulph was closed. The modern devotes not himself,

self, but what is indeed of infinitely more value, America and our West-Indies ; the commercial wealth and strength of Great-Britain, her armies and her navies ; yet no history is like to record his success. Philosophers hold, that in repeating an experiment, the process must be conducted precisely in every particular, as it had been before. There are, who impute the failure in his Lordship's experiment to a neglect of this wholesome caution ; who believe, that had the example been copied with exactness in the capital point, by a personal sacrifice, the division would most undoubtedly have been healed. I am of another opinion. I am clear the noble and learned Lord can heal it without any bodily harm. The danger lies in keeping it open.

In the present session of Parliament, the learned Lord goes further than in the last ; for, admitting the original injustice and inexpediency of the attempt, he contends for the necessity of pushing it to the last extremity. The morality of the doctrine having been thoroughly reprobated, I take my leave of it without a single remark. Not so suddenly shall I part with it in the political sense.

The position takes for granted, that America will accept of no atonement for the past, of no security against future injuries.

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The battle must be fought, like that between the fraternal offspring of the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, turning ancient fable into modern history. His meaning is corroborated by the application of the speech of Gustavus Adolphus to his soldiers marching to engage: "See those men there! If you do not kill them, they will kill you." Let us then examine the premises which are to justify the bloody conclusion. Truly, the ancestors of the New-England people have discovered, in many cases, a spirit of independence. Without staying to enquire, whether every instance was a crime, I say, will the British Parliament, in all the plenitude of its omnipotence, presume to arrogate the mysterious attributes of the God of Heaven and of Earth, by visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation? That God forbids the inference. Neither do the laws of reasoning permit a general conclusion to be drawn from a particular charge; from the part against the whole. The Congress is not composed of Delegates from New-England alone. It comprehends thirteen different Provinces.

These Provinces are discriminated from each other in modes of worship, in forms of government, in the products of the soil, in the manners and occupations of the in-

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habitants.

habitants. Nor is it long since those discordant principles, operating with a competition in interests, have ceased to produce their natural effects; divisions, perhaps aversions. What wonderful charm, ~~extinguishing~~ the sparks of mutual prejudices, has thus united the heterogeneous mass, and consolidated it into one congenial body? A body, animated in every part with the same spirit, whose wisdom and firmness are equally proof against the snares of artifice, and the shocks of power. This wonderful charm is, the love of liberty. That love is the ruling passion, controuling or absorbing the rest. They believe their liberty invaded, and join to defend it. These are the principles which cement America, and establish a general convention, giving to the recommendations of that faithful representative of their constituents, the authority of laws, with the energy and activity of a government by choice. America, to a love of liberty derived from her fore-fathers, associated a fond partiality for the country from whence they came. The glory of England has ever been the pride of all her Colonies. The Congress therefore, the symbol of the confederated continent, is alike attentive to repel the attack, and to restore the ancient harmony. The instructions of the several Colonies to their Delegates, inculcate these two cardinal points.

points. Some provinces go further, forbidding them to consent to any measure leading to a separation from the Mother Country. America, united for the two purposes, has clearly and concisely defined her pretensions. Place them as they stood in 1763, and they are satisfied. That step atones for the past, and is a security for the future.

If the bond of American union be thus dissolved by a generous concession, is it possible for any one or more of the Colonies, independently, inconsistently, contrary to solemn and repeated declarations, to persevere in a contention whose objects are removed or gratified? Or will the members of the Congress, from private motives, disobey the commands, and cross the wishes of the persons who invested them with the sacred trust? I CAN POINT INDEED TO EXAMPLES OF DELEGATED POWER THUS ABUSED; but until an example can be quoted from a *representative*, chosen and subsisting like the American Congress, I will not allow its force. That body is strictly the creature of the people, and yet it governs them implicitly. It governs them thus, because they see themselves guided by it, with ability and integrity, to the mark to which they are determined to go. Let any member of them all deviate a step from this line; were he the man

the most exalted in personal merit, and in popular favour, he would find himself neglected, deserted, and abandoned.

That America is aspiring to *independence*, is a visionary notion ; no traces upon earth are to be discovered of its existence. Perhaps it may be found in the moon, coupled with the romantic idea of an *American conquest*.

Let me not be misunderstood. Far from meaning that America can never become an *independent state*, I only contend that she does not wish for *independency at present* ; and that her bias towards England is so strong, that nothing but violence can keep the two countries asunder. A perseverance in *violence* will at last totally alienate her affections ; and *independency*, adopted from *necessity*, become the most distinguished favourite from choice. More especially, a *violence*, which aggravating the common calamities of war, instigates the domestics of a family to *treacherous murders*, suborns the wild *Indian* to native acts of *savage cruelty*, lays defenceless towns in *ashes*, and threatens to send famine to countries beyond the reach of fire or sword. But the attempts are more odious than successful. The Negro, as faithful to his master as the Highlander to his chief, resists an allurements which he does not comprehend. The Indian nations are them-

themselves enthusiasts for liberty, and are not urged by interest or revenge. The inhabitants of the coast find safe retreats, and plenty mocks at the denunciation of famine. Above all, America imputes not her sufferings to the *nation*, but to a *party*. To a *party*, considered by her to be alike inimical to the *freedom* of Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic. What, although many addresses for more blood have reached the throne, stimulating the common father of all his people to sacrifice his children to the idol Moloch, in the shape of dignity! America will know the origin of these addresses, their progress, and their whole history, and will not abate her veneration for the name of Englishmen, any more than does, amidst his detestation of the present measures,

Your most humble servant,

A SUGAR COLONIST.

New Lloyd's, February 22, 1776.

THIS ingenious correspondent reasons as justly as if he had acquired his method in a computing-house. Lest my polite readers should sneer at this remark, I will acquaint them that I found the arts of logic and algebra, which I learned in my youth, no more than mere speculations, until I saw them practically exemplified by posting
books

books in my father's compting-house. And when I reflect on the unhappy state of public affairs, I cannot help suspecting that our great rulers are very deficient in that branch of most useful learning, the method of stating an account by a mercantile equation, *pro* and *con*, as between debtor and creditor, according to which we estimate and compare the probable profit and loss of every projected undertaking before we engage in it; and were I a responsible Minister, I would, in the mercantile manner, state our present undertaking thus :

The EMPIRE	Dr.	CONTRA	Cr.
To a <i>civil war</i> with		By the <i>dignity</i> of the	
our children.		parent state.	

Upon which stating, I would reason thus :

If, peradventure, in this experiment, twenty millions of treasure should be wasted ! the trade of the commonwealth lost ! the navy ruined ! fifty thousand fellow-subjects slain by mutual massacre ! a hundred thousand starved to death ! and one million more reduced to beggary !

Will the word *dignity*, though backed by an act of Parliament, be sufficient to balance this dreadful account ? I take no notice of the risk of invasions ; we have the *word and honour* of some foreign Ministers to secure us from that danger.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M-

NUMBER IX.

To, the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Bartlett's-Buildings, Feb. 19, 1776.

ACCORDING to promise in my letter* of the 15th instant, I send the speech of one of our associates, delivered in our hall last term.

AN ATTORNEY.

*A COPY of a SPEECH delivered in ———'s-
Inn-Hall.*

IMPRESSED with an idea that the honourable Benchers are trustees for the Society, we, the Barristers and Students, take the liberty to offer our thoughts upon your late resolution. We mean not to enter into the question, if it can be a question, whether there is any difference between resistance to a bad government, or a rebellion to overturn the constitution of a country, and dethrone its King. We wish not to discuss the point, whether the soldiers already sent, or hereafter to be sent, against their fellow-subjects in America, are, or are not, the ministerial and parliamentary instruments of tyranny and oppression. We indeed, with concern, hear

* Vide West-India Merchant, No. 7.

that

that the soldiers, who have been employed against their fellow-citizens, are objects of relief, pity, and compassion—real objects of pity and compassion, in having been deceived into an unnatural and disgraceful service ; true objects of relief, in having suffered the greatest dishonour and the greatest calamities attendant upon war—*hunger, famine, and defeat*. We arraign not the *motive* which gave rise to the subscription, but we most sincerely lament the *occasion* of it. We complain not of the sum given, but we challenge and call in question the right, the propriety, and the mode of its being given. We insist that the transitory body of Benchers are the temporary trustees for the Society at large, and that no money belonging to it ought to be appropriated to any other uses, or for any other purposes, than those of the Society. We conceive it to be a breach of trust, to divert its revenue from this its proper channel. We think that the sum granted and subscribed might, with more propriety, have been expended in repairing the *ruinous* chambers of a *deserted* Inn of Court, than in a vain and ostentatious act of charity.

Equally with yourselves we commiserate the sufferings of the soldiery, but at the same time we wish to see no more *ministerial* sufferers objects of your *ministerial* bounty ;

bounty ; no more *devoted* victims objects of your *solicited* compassion. We feel for the hardships of individuals, and wish ourselves to relieve them, but we cannot acknowledge the justice or generosity of subscribing what was *not* your's to give. It was, we think, incumbent upon you ; it is, we hope, competent to you, to distinguish between an open violation of property, and an underhand disposal of trust money. In our humble apprehension, the difference consists only in this : The one is very mean and pitiful ; the other bold and daring.

Men ought to be just before they are generous. *Nemo dat qui non habet*. These, and the like legal maxims, with the *proper application* of them, cannot but be known to the *learned* Benchers of this inn.

Further, Gentlemen, we conceive that the subscriptions set on foot, are not so much calculated for the purpose of relieving distress, as of promoting human misery. We consider them as bribes, and not rewards ; instigations to cruelty, and not exertions of humanity. To develop the characters of men, or as Lord Clarendon somewhere expresses himself, " to dissect their infirmities," is a painful task ; to arraign the motives of their actions, is always an invidious one. But thus much we will be bold to say, that in the Gazette

list of Addressers, there are men who were never so much as suspected of wishing well to this country. In the news-paper catalogue of subscribers, the names of persons are to be found who were never thought to feel for distress or ever known to relieve an object. In former charities, the widow gave her mite, and the unknown hand dropped the donation ; in the present, the benefactor announces his name, and the *quantum* of his benevolence to the world. " Who giveth in secret, Heaven rewards openly ; " who giveth openly, the Minister rewards in secret. We are taught the first, I verily believe the latter. This at least is certain, that the subscriptions are pleasing to the Minister, and grateful to his master. The reason is but too plain and obvious ; they give a sanction to the violent measures of an unrelenting and desperate Junto. Ministries have brought a great nation to the brink of ruin, and nothing is so agreeable to them as a bill of indemnity. An offer of pardon before, or a certainty of pardon after the commission of a crime, is the greatest possible encouragement to either public or private offenders.

Another reason which weighs in our minds against the present subscriptions, is, that they are intended to produce the same effect as Addressers. The purport indeed of the one is more open and avowed ; the design

design of the other more artful and concealed. Addressees breathe a most unchristian spirit; without cause they provoke a pious and peaceable King to make a cruel war upon his own subjects, which, without reason, his Ministers refused to wage against the natural enemies of his subjects. The pain which the father of his people feels upon this occasion, is inexpressibly great. Happily subscriptions relieve the wounded feelings of his Majesty, and by an offer of succouring the soldier's widow, prevail upon his reluctant mind to sacrifice the soldier. If, Gentlemen, subscriptions were not graciously approved by our most gracious Sovereign, we should add, that we cannot admire the liberality of granting large sums of money, in order to excite a fierce soldiery to depopulate and lay waste fertile and extensive provinces. We cannot comprehend that charity which is forward to relieve the distress of individuals, and at the same time desirous to entail misery upon thousands. The starving Scotch charity is, thank Heaven, cold in an Englishman's breast *.

* To the disgrace of human nature, the Lord of Scotland pleaded in Parliament the necessity of starving the Americans. To the dishonour of the British nation, the restraining bill passed; and in contempt of our understandings, this and the late acts of Parliament are called merciful and humane.

Whether we view him in the light of an ostentatious subscriber, or a flattering addressor, we cannot look upon him as a friend to his country, who in any way, or by any arts, promotes a ruinous and expensive civil war; a war unfortunate in its commencement, terrible in the prosecution, and uncertain in the event. Victory over the cowards, even S—d—ch must allow, is doubtful. To hazard the safety of a kingdom for a revenue, which is not to be raised, or if raised, which will not be sufficient to pay the military collectors; to enforce a *dubious* right by the point of the sword, which right is not to be exercised after the sword is sheathed in the scabbard; to continue a contest, in which it is more than probable that every thing may be lost, and no advantage gained, is the extreme of political madness. America is driven to *desperation*; she aimed not at *independence*. England is the seat of empire at present, but it should be remembered, that if a reconciliation does not take place, *ibi Imperium fore, ubi Victoria fuerit*. The christian, the man of humanity, and the true friend to his unhappy country, is he who deprecates the ravages and horrors of war; not he who stirs up the spirit of destruction. Even the gentle N—, touched with the sense of human woe, weeps over his own victories. It is not with him, as
other

other conquerors : the feelings of the man are not lost in the glories of a triumph. It is but doing him justice to say, that he has tenderness enough to sigh for peace, but not manliness enough to make it.

On another account, Gentlemen, we cannot approve the donation ; it was partial and insidious. Like some smuggled Borough Address, it was meant to convey the sense of a society without consulting the opinion of its members. Ten men take upon themselves to suggest to the Minister the sentiments of more than twenty times that number. I am not mistaken in my premises, nor have I drawn a false conclusion. I have committed no error in calculation.

With respect, Gentlemen, to the act we complain of, we conceive that no men, or set of men, have a right to give and grant that which is not their own. If you have the right, pardon our present presumption ; if you have not the right, rescind your late resolution. The precedent is dangerous, and tends to the annihilation of a society, of which we are members, and in whose happiness and prosperity we feel ourselves interested and concerned. But if the precedent was not dangerous, yet the measure is preposterous. To begin a war by opening a subscription, is no happy prognostic of success. Indeed a dark cloud hangs over this kingdom ; every thing wears

wears a most unfavourable aspect; Manchester takes the lead in Addresses; *Harley* sets on foot subscriptions, and in support or encouragement of them, the honourable trustees of a Law Society violate their trust."

I THOUGHT t'other day, Mr. Miller, that my correspondent from the Cocoa Tree had been guilty of a political solecism, when he talked of a *regal commonwealth*, till I recollected Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Germany, were avowedly such in their institution; and that our wise Queen Elizabeth, notwithstanding her great sway, always affected to call her dominions a commonwealth, and by her remission of taxes, proved that she sincerely thought them so. In this view, I know nothing that points out more clearly the nature of our excellent *republican* constitution, than that all its constituent parts, as well as every little offspring or derivative, are in their essence types of the whole; all, and every one of them, liable to similar disorders, and capable of similar remedies. The magistrates, under the sanction and authority of the laws, are armed with power to maintain equal justice and peace among all the people. And while their power is employed for those purposes, it is so readily submitted to, as to appear irresistible.

But

But when the governing power, or magistracy itself, becomes visibly corrupt, it soon loses the good opinion of the people, and with that its authority; and if they who exercise it, have not the good sense, moderation, or resolution, to reform their conduct, as soon as they perceive its enormity complained of, the community, after vainly remonstrating, will always endeavour to compel a reformation, by taking the power into their own hands.

Thus we see this little community of lawyers rising up as one man, against the malversation suspected in their rulers, in which probably they are as much guided by their republican instinct, as by the knowledge of their particular laws. And thus has every intolerable enormity in this great commonwealth, been finally corrected or curbed, when the perverse obstinacy of its rulers, turning a deaf ear to the repeated murmurs of the people, has provoked them to resume the supreme power, for the purpose of redressing grievances, by replacing it in better hands.

Wise, therefore, superlatively wise, are those rulers, who can foresee the storm, and correct their errors in time.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M-

NUMBER X.

Mr. Miller,

AS a mere merchant, I might confine my thoughts and my correspondence with you, to the consideration of national profit and loss in trade ; but as a man, and an Englishman, I cannot avoid feeling and expressing my feelings for the wounded honour of my country, and of humanity.

I remember, some years ago, two Italian noblemen of great families, officers in the Austrian army, stimulated by avarice, and allured by the brilliancy of diamonds and golden toys, robbed and murdered a travelling jeweller at Maestricht, cut his carcass into junks, and packed it up in his chest, in place of the jewels and wealth which they had purloined ; and being immediately seized and questioned by the Dutch magistrates, they, as men of honour, disdained to deny the fact, but confidently thought they made a reasonable and gentleman-like defence, in saying, *the fellow was only a Jew*. It seems, however, those reasons, which probably would have been sufficient to palliate, if not to justify the action, in some parts of Italy, did not prevent the Dutch tribunal from condemning them to the wheel.

Alas !

Alas ! I am heartily sorry to see that these maxims of Italian morality are growing very fast on my countrymen in power ; and that the basest actions seem, in their opinion, to lose their atrocity, when they are only perpetrated by British authority on the vagrants of trade and colonies. But if we have in the wildness of wrath authorised any measures, that on reflection we should be ashamed of, I hope it is not too late to stop the farther progress of our own infamy !

I resign the remainder of my column to-day to my new correspondent, whom you will find no less a painter than a planter.

The West-India Merchant.

TO the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

April 8, 1776.

As you have declared it to be your intention to avoid personal reflections, I should hardly have ventured on sending you the inclosed letter, were I not conscious that *personal resentment* had no share in its composition. Its object, indeed, is to arraign the public conduct of a certain individual on a particular occasion ; but, exclusive of that conduct, the character of the honourable gentleman to whom it is addressed, stands just as it did ; and if the charge now brought against him, be founded on mis-

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information, my censures fall of course to the ground. With this plea in my favour, I trust you will have no objection to the publication of this my first essay, which may probably produce a further correspondence from, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

A PLANTER.

To G—V—R —.

S I R,

IN a short, but memorable speech in the House of Commons, when you stood forth unexpectedly to promote the motion for an Address to his Majesty, you are said not only to have declared yourself with singular acrimony against the people of America, but to have expressed a savage hope and unchristian confidence, that the negro slaves in the southern provinces might, by proper encouragement, be induced to rise, and embrue their hands in the blood of their masters.

For the honour of humanity I was unwilling, Sir, for a considerable time, to believe that this foul charge against you had the slightest foundation in truth; but foul as the charge certainly is, it stands hitherto uncontradicted. It has been repeated in more than one publication; yet neither you,
nor

nor any friend for you, have shewn the smallest anxiety to refute it. We have even been told, that a promotion in your family has been in some measure the consequence of it. The public must naturally suppose then, that it was fairly brought, and that in these days of piety and grace, it is thought by those in power, to reflect no dishonour on a man, hitherto respected for his abilities and urbanity, to avow sentiments which I verily believe would have disgraced the bloodiest inquisitor in the Court of Philip the Second.

I fear, Sir, our righteous Ministers scarcely knew the full extent of these humane wishes of your's. Had they been (*as you were*) in one of our West-India islands, during an insurrection of the slaves, and had they seen (*as you saw*) a small specimen of the manner in which these savages conduct a war, I am persuaded they would have given a stronger testimony of their approbation of your zeal in their service, than that of advancing your noble relation only. Yourself would also, I think, have dipt your fingers in the golden fountain of preferment ; for surely, when Cowardice is in power, it is somewhat unnatural and uncommon, that Cruelty (her ruffian sister) should remain disregarded and forgotten.

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Let me therefore, good Sir, do that justice to your merit on this occasion, of which a false modesty has hitherto deprived you. A short recital of a trifling fact, which occurred in your own Government of ———, and under your own eye, will, I am persuaded, afford a better idea to administration of the nature and extent of the benevolent proposal and gallant wish of your's, than even the eloquence of those consummate politicians and sound divines, John Wesley and Dean Tucker.

In an insurrection of the slaves some years ago in the island before mentioned (and, for the honour of the ——— planters, I can aver with truth, that it began among slaves who had no just cause of complaint against their master) the negroes belonging to a certain plantation took the opportunity of their owner's absence to surround the dwelling-house, and seize on the person of their unhappy mistress. She was a young lady of great beauty, meek, innocent, and unoffending; had been married about two years, and was in bed with a lovely infant when the bloody savages surrounded the house, and demanded her person. Resistance and prayers were equally fruitless. The female slaves who attended her, dared not to express their pity (if pity they felt) but having hastily thrown a loose robe over her, delivered the miserable
victim

victim into their hands ; and she heard the savages calmly deliberate on the means of putting her to death by the most lingering torments, without uttering a single supplicatory groan, so entirely were her faculties absorbed in astonishment and horror. It happened, however, that her person and appearance (for the moon shone bright) excited the appetite of one of the villains, who changing the subject, declared that he would carry her into the woods, and preserve her for his mistress. The others, dreading his resentment, reluctantly consented ; and the next object of their cruelty was the child, which they instantly devoted to destruction. Nature now resumed her seat in the bosom of the unfortunate mother. She screamed aloud, and clasping the knees of the beastly savage who had spared her life, implored him to save her child. She implored in vain. The monsters derived a luxury from her tears ; and to compleat their delight, holding up the poor babe by the feet in the mother's sight, they cleft it in twain with a hatchet ; and indeed happy would it have been for the poor lady, had her own fate been as quickly decided ; for though at this instant assistance came and rescued her from their hands, it came too late. The unhappy woman was saved but in part. Her senses were gone for ever, and she remains at this day

day (if yet she lives) a pitiable, hopeless, and incurable maniac !

Let me now ask you, good Sir, (and I lay it to your conscience) whether the gallant and heroic feat above mentioned, was not in your *contemplation* at the time you recommended similar measures against the Americans? Nay turn not your flexible neck aside, but answer me. Fie, man! what are you ashamed of? Why, the Ministry commend your zeal, and in fact have *adopted the project*. My *Lord of Minden* declares it a high improvement in the art of war. It is true the considerate, the humane, and the benevolent part of the nation, however they differ from the Americans in political sentiments, shudder with horror at the base proposal. They consider possibly, that though the Americans may be wrong, yet that they act under a conviction (however ill founded) that they are in the right; and that they have certainly, even in this kingdom, some high and respectable authorities on their side. This plea, it is true, does not entirely justify; but perhaps with the mild and the merciful, it may, in some degree, lessen the great enormity of their offences. It is confessed too, in the cool hour of reflection, that the present system of government is at least *new* to the Colonies; and, if it were not taying too much, I would venture to add, that

that the prejudices of the Americans (if prejudices they are) being of *British ancestry*, are entitled to some little indulgence from *Britons* and *brethren*. But all these notions, I confess, are at this time uncourtly and uncouth. *The vultures of the North* scream aloud for blood, and blood they will have. Yet, to speak plainly, when I see a man to whom nature, for far nobler ends, has given reach of thought, and powers for just reflection, prostitute his fair fame to the base revengeful purposes of an arbitrary faction; when I see such a person excel in projects of cruelty, the Counsellors of Nero, Domitian, and Commodus, I confess that I feel something for human nature, and blush that I am a man.

A PLANTER.

N U M B E R X I.

S I R,

April 12, 1776.

AS you have invited a general correspondence upon the interesting subject of the American quarrel, I venture to send you a fresh consignment.

The guards going to America have been reviewed by the King. Besides their usual exercise, they had been taught, by crossing a ditch, and attacking an hillock of
furze

furze bushes, to push an enemy over deep ravines, and drive him out of thick woods. I am serious. I can discern in the splendid spectacle of a military review, the solid advantages of art made perfect by use, and the force of habit operating like the impulse of instinct. Applauding the principle, I lament the neglect of its application to other essential points of discipline. The brigade should have encamped at Wimbledon, with all the precautions which will become necessary for their safety in America. To reconnoitre the country, occupy posts, place centries, mount guards, and throw up entrenchments, are only a part of their cares. They must depend upon themselves for provisions, for water, for straw, and for all necessaries. From Wimbledon they should have marched in soldier-like order, carrying their arms and the accustomed rounds of powder and ball, their knapsacks and cantines properly provided, and their tent poles. Their field pieces, with the waggons for ammunition, for bread, and for all the subsistence of man and horse, for baggage, and for attendants, should have accompanied. Out-scouts, and flanking parties should have guarded against surprizes, ambuscades, and lurking riflemen. Above all, no straggling must have been suffered; it would have as effectually thinned the ranks by
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 desertion

desertion here, as it will by death in America. Marching in this manner by day, and thus encamping at night, the route to Portsmouth would have given them a notion of their future business, a business not to be conducted like a campaign in the plains of Germany or Flanders, where the peasants are equally ready to accommodate both armies for their money; but in a country abounding with strong posts and dangerous passes; in a country where every man taking a decisive part in the quarrel, is an enraged enemy, prepared to defend or to destroy his property, as to oppose with firmness, or to retreat and leave a desert behind him, as may best suit the general interest of the common cause. Nor would the embarkation have been delayed. The transports are not ready, and more time will be loitered away before they can be ready, than would have been sufficient for the useful purpose of learning lessons, which a single day's march from the sea side must oblige them to practice. But custom has long looked upon a review as a raree show; and custom, like other despots, is not ready to give way to the remonstrances of reason. The usual parade only was therefore to be repeated with a few embellishments upon the usual spot. Had the minds of the gentlemen of the army been less enthralled by custom, the plan

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I have mentioned could not have escaped them. Surely it would have afforded a singular pleasure to his Majesty, to have reviewed a body of his guards in all the circumstance, as well as in the pride and pomp of war. Next to the substantial advantage, I value the pleasure it would have afforded the King; and in contributing to that pleasure, as an honest man, I will not yield the palm to any.

I leave the guards to go to a matter of more importance. The army cannot arrive early enough in America to act with effect this campaign. The doctrine amongst the ministerial runners, I know, is apocryphal; but it is orthodox amongst their superiors. Administration have consulted the great military officers, and are mortified with an opinion, which they ought to have foreseen themselves, without the assistance of the *second sight*.

Whether such a formal opinion has been asked, or has been given, is not easy for a private individual to say with certainty; but the grounds for such an opinion are obvious. Great-Britain is providing a force by land and sea, greater than Europe has for centuries beheld for a single expedition. The object is without example; demanding all that force—and more. It is to make a war of conquest, at the distance of three and four thousand miles, against

gainst an hardy, a numerous, and united people, expecting the attack, and determined upon defence. The preparations adequate to the extent, the multiplicity, the variety, the uncertainty, the dangers, and distance of the service, are immense. These are the *impedimenta belli* with a witness ; retarding the departure, delaying the voyage, and embarrassing the motions of the force, collected and collecting, for the arduous enterprize of the new crusado. A crusado for the propagation of the gospel of faith in parliamentary omnipotence.

It is giving a credit to administration, beyond what will be universally admitted, to allow a capacity in the several departments equal to the task ; a capacity comprehending all things, providing for all things. Let me add, what they have no right to expect, a series of good fortune, uninterrupted by the whole chapter of accidents. That the storm, which laid Sir Peter Parker's ship like a log upon the water, and disabled and dispersed his fleet, may be the last disaster ; yet the year is already advanced, while the whole of an armament destined to act above a thousand leagues from England, remains still to be completed. It is impossible therefore it should act with effect this campaign. Our rulers, in all the plenitude of their power, can-

not arrest the course of nature. The sun will not stand still, nor the moon be stayed, for the Joshuas of the present day to avenge themselves of their enemies ; enemies to be extirpated, because they are determined to be neither hewers of wood, nor drawers of water, to the congregation of their own people.

I am the firmer in the opinions I have advanced, because they are repugnant to my wishes. I wish, Sir, the utmost perfection of discipline, not only to the guards, but to the whole army. I wish them fairly landed upon the Northern continent ; not that I think they will conquer America. I think that experience will demonstrate the impracticability of the attempt, although reason has failed to convince.

I have always understood that Cervantes formed his Don Quixote upon the model of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Nor is the expedition to Africa, the leading feature of the likeness, less extravagant than the adventure of the windmills. Be it remembered, the Spaniards did then excel, and do continue to excel, the Moors in every circumstance, to a degree beyond what Englishmen in Europe surpass the Englishmen in America. The Mediterranean, compared to the Atlantic, is a mill pond. Whatever might have been the motive of the Charles of those days to
make

make the attempt ; whatever may have induced the present Charles to repeat it, the issue is ominous. It is a lesson for those who boast their solicitude for the honour and dignity of their country.

I repeat, the conquest of America is a romantic exploit, not to be atchieved under every advantage. It is therefore I lament the absence of any. It will unhappily prove a fund for fresh excuses. The country gentlemen will be told, the troops are yet new to the nature of the service. The season for action was past before their arrival. In the spring they will be ready to carry every thing before them, and you may depend upon the success we have promised you. Grant us only the means of another campaign. If you stop short, you throw away the millions you have already expended. Perish those millions ! as perish they must ; but let them perish alone, nor drag down more millions to gild their fall. Rouze then, ye country gentlemen out of your lethargic stupor ! The deceitful hope of an American revenue, has been your bane. It is the poisonous opiate which has benumbed your faculties, made you senseless of the misfortunes of others, and blind to your own fate. Awake as from a profound sleep, and startle to see yourselves carried in it to the edge of a precipice.

Let

Let the adventure of the ship Dickenson* put an end to your credulity in the assurances of Ministers, and the faith of France. Withdraw your implicit confidence, and think and act as becomes a very respectable, although sometimes a much mistaken body.

Leave Ministers, and those who partake of the spoils, to the ruinous projects necessary to the enjoyment of their present power and emoluments of office. So far from sharing in the rich confiscations, if perchance America should fall, the country gentleman will lose even his darling revenue in the dispute. That will be absorbed in maintaining the conquest. Say, the old inhabitants were massacred, and the lands distributed amongst the loyal victors! the succeeding generation will grow up Americans, and look upon American privileges as the most valuable appendages of American possessions. Thus the first William distributed the estates of the vanquished amongst his followers; and thus the descendants of the Norman Barons extorted from his son, the laws and liberties of their Saxon predecessors.

* The ship Dickenson—the first American ship seized by the crew and brought into England, by which their correspondence with France was discovered.—See Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. II. Page 361.

If the landed gentleman should think my address earnest beyond measure, I beg the favour of him to consider well the West-India petition and evidence, as introduced and summed up by Mr. Glover at the bar of the House of Commons the last session. A copy of the pamphlet was delivered to every member of the legislature. In the state there given of his own situation, of your's, and of mine, he will see just cause for excusing, perhaps for joining the earnestness of

Your humble servant,

A SUGAR COLONIST.

N U M B E R X I I .

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT:

S I R,

I DID not suspect your correspondent, the *Sugar Colonist*, from his former communications, to have been so learned in the art of war, till his letter, which appeared in your No. XI. convinced me, that he is *un homme qui a vu le loup* ; he has seen *service*, is beyond a *martinet*, and goes deep into the *grand detail*. I myself am not quite ignorant in military matters, having served some campaigns in my youth ; and therefore, I presume to say, though with great submission to his judgment and military

litary abilities, that, I apprehend, for want of connecting in his idea our political and military plans together, he has not done justice to the wisdom that directed the *march* of the *Pretorian cohort*; for, as the primary views of administration are to raise a revenue from America, and until that is effected, to make a *predatory war*, it was, I suppose, thought to be the most advantageous species of *exercise* during the march, to let them try their *dexterity* in *plundering* all the country in their rout to the sea coast, which, it seems, they have done very effectually. And this excellent disposition also had the happy consequence of preventing the great desertion, which might reasonably have been apprehended; for being indulged in the liberty of straggling, in order to go through the aforesaid manœuvres, the gallant adventurers were under the absolute necessity of *sculking* back to their *colours* for protection against the *civil power*, which, if not properly *instructed and loyally pliant*, might have retained them for the judgment of an angry and stubborn Jury.

And now, as to any thing that can be said concerning the losses that particulars may suffer by such manœuvres, it may be answered, that in the various occurrences incident to a common cause, every one must suffer a little, more or less, as they happen

happen to lie in the way of the evil. For instance, you say “the *prohibitory and capture acts* starve the West-Indies.” True, so they may ; but we could not effectually carry on our operations, without running that risk ; and, in an empire of millions, the casual ruin or starving of an hundred thousand, is no object in the cabinet. We have had men heretofore in military commands, who, from motives of humanity, have kept themselves and their squadrons from rushing into dangerous conflicts ; for which tenderness they have been degraded by their masters, and stigmatised by the vulgar, under the derisive names of *Minden hero*, and the like. But when the turns of Fortune have wheeled these men again into places of higher power and less danger, they seeing the folly of their former feebleness, have put on the apathy of able politicians, and revindicating a noble character, have doomed millions to misery. But to return : If the worst, which you apprehend in regard to this country, should happen ; that is, if your sugar colonies should not be able to raise any produce for exportation, and for our consumption, they in the Leeward Islands at least, will save the payment of the four and 1-half per cent. duty ; which, in the Exchequer, we compute ought to be at an average 50,000*l.* a year to the Crown : Wherefore, if your

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Creoles

Creoles and Crabs will only go home, and live on their yams, they will be as well able to bear the loss of Mr. Glover's millions, as the privy purse will that of the fifty thousand pounds.

I am, Sir, your's &c.

A TALLY CUTTER.

TO the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

BY the Provincial ship seized at Bristol, we have authoritative intelligence, that there is a friendly communication between France and the American Congress: And the last accounts from Jamaica confirm several former advices that we had of both Spaniards and French collecting a naval and military force in those parts. Far from being alarmed with this news, I draw from it almost certain hopes of relief from the distress, which our late letters from the islands have assured us they began already to feel. It is well known, the West-India Islands belonging to foreign powers, depend as absolutely for their supply of provisions and lumber on the North-Americans, as our's do; therefore it is rational to suppose they would collect a force there, in concert with the Congress, to protect their mutual commerce. By this means, I think,
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it is probable, our sugar plantations may, in some measure, be supported by a smuggled trade thro' the foreign islands. Nor do I fear this armament will attack any of our settlements; for besides, that the French and Spaniards have already islands enough of their own, I hope the brotherly affection of the Northern Colonists is not quite alienated from their unoffending countrymen in the sugar colonies, but that under their present hard circumstances, distressed and abandoned by their mother, they will, at all events, interest themselves in their protection.

I am, Sir, &c.

A CREOLE.

IN conformity, Mr. Miller, with the rule I prescribed to myself in my first paper, I stifle none of my correspondents letters, though perhaps nothing can add more sensibly to human affliction, than to see that their sufferings are made matter of amusement to their unfeeling task-masters. Well it becomes such as my correspondent, the *Tally Cutter*, one of those excising vermin who riot in the spoils of the public, to sneer at and sport with our present calamities.

In a former paper (No. II.) I acquainted

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you

you with our deplorable state, and that I feared this country, after cutting off the usual subsistence from our sugar islands by the late capture act, would not even grant them the only relief, which, during the continuation of the war, was in their power.

You have seen published, and authenticated by our Secretary, in the Gazetteer of March 2, that we deputed a committee to wait on the Ministers, in a decent and respectful manner, with our propositions for relief, in consequence of their having declared in a very great assembly, when the bill for the capture act was in debate, and opposed with irrefragable argument, "that if any other plan could be devised for relieving the sugar colonies, they would promote it to the utmost of their power." And you have seen, under the same authority, that our propositions were answered in the negative*.

Such warm and pointed professions, from persons whose nods seem to command the *votes* and the *fate of nations*, convinced myself, and some others of our community, who, from our moderation, are suspected and accused (by the hotter heads) of being ministerial tools; I say, convinced us at that time, that the noble Lords who made those professions, were sincerely in earnest to

* See Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. II. Page 313.

to serve us, and not merely intending to baffle opposition by fallacious promises, instead of solid argument ; and therefore knowing how entirely it was in their power to make good their professions ; in order to form a plan, we consulted and deliberated in several great meetings, wherein all parties agreed in this general proposition, “ that unless we could find an additional market in Great-Britain and Ireland, for the rum and sugar that was heretofore taken off by North-America ; which produce, turned into money, might enable the planters to purchase lumber and provisions wherever they can be procured, it would not be in their power, during the continuation of the war, and the present laws, to carry on their usual plantations, and to feed their servants and negroes.”

The method of relief which we proposed was simple, preceded, and within every one's memory practised, not only without inconvenience, but with manifest advantage to the people, and to the Exchequer. It increased the revenue ; it supplied a species of spirits less pernicious to mankind, than those fresh drawn from corn ; it left barley to the brewers, to make cheaper and wholesomer beer ; in fine, it was notorious, that during the three years that the distillation of grain was totally stopped,

stopped, the sobriety and morals of the people were amazingly improved.

But the cause, which then called for that expedient, happened here *at home*, where, agreeable to the old proverb, *charity* always *begins*, and accordingly the cause was felt and attended to; for every body has humanity and generosity enough to feel for themselves, and for their own sake; whereas the calamity apprehended at present, will only fall immediately on the West-Indies at 4000 miles distance, where, if three or four hundred thousand people, white and black, should be starved or ruined, it cannot be expected to touch our feelings here as sensibly, as if our bread was either to rise or fall a penny in the pound weight; for if the first case was to happen, the desperation of a hundred thousand vagrant labourers, ranging through the kingdom in search of food, would be so alarming, to the country gentlemen, that without delay they would move Parliament to stop the distillation of grain to accommodate the starving poor, well knowing that "*hunger can break through stone walls.*"

But if it should be proposed to administration to adopt the like expedient now, to enable us to spare bread for the starving sugar colonies, and to take their rum in payment for it, then these same country gentlemen

tllemen are pointed out to us as unfeeling tyrants, whose uproar would rend the walls of St. Stephen's, and overwhelm government itself, rather than run the risk of discouraging the farmer, by making bread a farthing cheaper. And yet these are the *just* and the legal *representatives* of all the distant parts of the British empire! The *representatives* who feel for all their wants and necessities as they do for their own! And it is to the *discretion of administrators*, so feeling, so equitable, so humane, that the inhabitants of all the earth should surrender their natural and civil rights, their liberties, properties, and lives, with an *unconditional submission*!

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R X I I I .

Mr. Miller,

Lloyd's, May 8, 1776.

THE retreat of the royal army from Boston, their starving condition during ten months blockade, the impracticability of victualling or assisting them, notwithstanding all our endeavours for six months past, and all the treasure wasted in those fruitless attempts; and lastly, our madness in appearing still to pursue the same ruinous measures, in defiance of reason

son and experience, together with the recollection of my *horrid dream* (the subject of my first letter) have altogether so sunk my spirits, that I had resolved to lay down my pen ; for, alas ! we seem, from the wickedness of the few, and the weakness of the many, to be hurrying headlong to our political dissolution. But I must not disappoint my correspondents, who have honoured me with their thoughts ; and desire, through your favour, to be heard though they are by much too light to accord with my present melancholy apprehensions.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Tom's coffee-house, May 4, 1776.

INDULGE me in the interruption, for a moment, of your serious speculations, by a lively story. It is only a dance between the acts of a tragedy. Upon the news of the retreat of the troops from Boston to Halifax, a ministerial man said. " they had carried off every thing they had any value for." " They have then carried off their playhouse with them," observes a bystander. " No occasion for that, adds another, as they may take a church for the purpose. But what play will they now act ? The *Blockade of Boston* is over." " They are
to

to play the *Run-away*, replies the first, they have it in *rehearsal*."

I am your humble servant,

Y. Z.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R, White's chocolate house, Friday morning,

FINDING a pen and ink on the table, and a vacancy of better amusement, I will trouble you to be the channel of conveying a line or two of my thoughts to your correspondent, who calls himself the *King's Friend*, at the *Cocoa Tree*. [See No. 5, London Evening, Feb. 13.]

My good Cocoanist,

YOU seem to lament the decline of our general affluence and social prosperity, since the great increase of the national debt, and of our taxes; but in describing the hospitality of your grand-father's house, which you tell us, "was so great, that notwithstanding the extent of the building, gentlemen were obliged to lie *two in a bed*," how came you not to observe that the same, indeed greater hospitality, by that mark, is transferred to the court of our Royal Master, where we not only lie *three in a bed*, but so excessive is our throng of guests, that we have neither bed nor table room

N

for

for half our company, though every (heretofore useless) garret, outhouse, and hovel, has been of late years fitted up for our reception ; and so alluring is the entertainment, that many think themselves well off with the prospect of a bed, or an elbow chair in *reversion* ; that is, to be allowed to have the right of *turning in*, when another *incumbent* rises. The agreeable politeness of the Court has likewise rubbed off a deal of that rustic rigidity which prevailed in the times you speak of, whereby people were less accommodating to one another ; for, you say, “ all single gentlemen, and young people, of the *same sex only*, were packed together ;” but we have got over those starch scruples entirely, and I myself, at this very time, though you are so happy as to lie single, have an *old maid of honour* quartered upon me ; so that if hospitality is fled from the country (no matter from what cause) we have no reason upon the whole to lament, since we find it so thoroughly established at Court.

Now, as to your old friend, who complains that, from taxes, and the dearness of labour and necessaries, his estate (though with the rental doubled) scarcely enables him to maintain sixteen inmates, though it formerly (that is, before the establishment of a national debt, and the consequent increase of taxes) maintained be-
tween

tween forty and fifty; I must answer gravely thus: from the period he refers to, the spirit of gaming seized, if not the whole, at least the leading men of the nation. In so large a set of adventurers, we must naturally suppose some sharpers, many dupes, and some such as are commonly reputed *fair players*; that is, men of understanding, who study the doctrine of chances, and lie in the way of profiting by that knowledge, without actually cogging the dice, or packing the cards. I cannot avoid saying, that your honest old friend was an innocent dupe; for though he touched neither cards or dice, yet the manner of the *national game* was so contrived, that his estate must always pay its share of the *general losings*, to those whose superior understanding led them to the temple of fortune. For instance, I myself had a nominal thousand pounds a year in land, which, *communibus annis*, paid me about 750 l. clear of all taxes and outgoings. I sold it some years ago for 27,000 l. in cash, besides reserving an annuity for my life of neat 300 l. Out of my 27,000 l. I gave 4000 l. for an absolute seat in Parliament during my life. I also paid a few debts, and the remainder of my money placed in the funds, produces me upwards of 800 l. a year; so that I had directly a neat income of 1100 l. per ann. besides my seat in Parliament; for

which, and for my courtly friendship, I enjoy about 700l. a year more in present, and which may be eventually a thousand ; all which, being now about 1800l. (or eventually 2100l.) a year, must be raised partly out of the estate I sold, partly from yours, and from every other in the kingdom, that of your old friend included, who from this instance, I think, is proved to be a simple and honest dupe, at the same time that I think myself equally honest, though not so simple, but one who has acted with such a degree of prudence as becomes your associate in friendship, and your humble servant,

A FAIR GAMESTER.

I MUST acknowledge, Mr. Miller, that my correspondent, *the Gamester*, is a tolerable fair player (excepting in his being combined with sharpers) and is likely to continue successful, while he and his fraternity are, by their actual strength, influence, or subtlety, able to make the dupes submit to such gross imposition. I conceive the legerdemain of a state conjuror can occasionally have such accounts of income produced, and such countercharges of outgoings suppressed, as may enable him to form a specious and flattering abstract of revenue for the annual amusement of the *dupes*, and perhaps to convince them,

them, that to give away half the commerce of the empire, and to throw ten or twelve millions a year after it, shall have the inconceivable effect of improving their trade, and of adding to their national wealth and prosperity.

A kinsman of mine, who dined with me last week, told me how pleased he was, by hearing from the orator of the Budget, that we were amazingly benefited by the loss of North-America, and the prosecution of the war. "Our revenue, said he, is wonderfully increased, and increasing every day." "And pray, my good friend, said I to him, how comes it, that in this public prosperity, you, with all your regular œconomy, fall every year so much more in debt, that I fear your mortgage will be foreclosed?" "Why really, said he, I must confess the increased prices of all articles of consumption, are so much beyond the increase of our rents, that I must either suspect the truth of what I heard the other day in the House, or must believe the *wealth* of the *public Treasury*, to be the certain cause of our *private poverty*. But, what can I do? You know my manner of life, and the unfortunate necessity I am under of keeping up the interest our family has had for a century past, and which has insured us the honour of representing the county. If there is faith
in

in man, I shall have a place in a few months that will enable me to give up all my estate to trustees, till the whole of my debts are discharged." "Ah, my dear coz, said I, this has been your language for near ten years past; but as I have often told you, either that place will never come to you, or if it should, you'll find it will not have the effect you hope for. You know, continued I, I write *The West-India Merchant*; here's a letter directed for me, through my printer, from a person of your end of the town, calling himself a *Gamester*;—read it. The writer is no fool, and hopes also that he sha'n't be a *dupe*."

When he had read it about half through, I saw his countenance turn very grave: "Cozen, said he, trust me with this letter till to morrow; you know you may depend on my fidelity: I'll send it back, perhaps with a line or two of my own." The next day I received it, with the following note wrote in the cover.

Observation on the Letter of a Gamester, by an enlightened Dupe.

"To elucidate this system, let us suppose a community, consisting of 10 noble *sharpers*, without either money or land; of 500 spirited *gamesters*, having ready money; and of 100,000 *honest dupes*, having land that gives employment to a million of *industrious labourers*. The ten noble sharpers

ers want continually to borrow large sums of money for their *honourable* subsistence, for which they have no security to give, nor fund to pay the interest ; but conferring with the gamesters, and seducing them into a confederacy, by teaching them the arts of gambling, they altogether cajole and confound the slender understandings of the *dupes*, so as to persuade them it is just and necessary, for the good of the community, that their lands should stand charged as security for the sums proposed to be borrowed ; and then the gamesters making the collusive loan, they and the sharpers share and divide the greatest part of the money among themselves ; and thus, by *hocus pocus*, the lands of the dupes, and the labour of their industrious dependants, become bound in mortgage to the gamesters. But now, though this *fair gamester* seems quite cock-a-hoop on the successful game he has hitherto played, in my view of it, I think his profit is not absolutely certain, unless he can be insured against the chance of the 100,000 *dupes* coming to a better understanding of their *rights* and of their *power*."

By this observation, I am convinced my kinsman sees clearly the error he has been so long in ; but I have no great hopes of his being much the better for this discovery, because, notwithstanding the lucid intervals

tervals of such lunatics, an *epidemical madness*, which has raged among us ever since the Restoration, seems not likely to be eradicated, otherways than by the raging of some greater evil; as the plague, which infested this capital for ages, was only removed by the great conflagration in the year 1666.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R X I V .

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

Nec servum meliorem ullum, nec deteriorem dominum fuisse.
Sueton. in Vita Calig.

S I R,

Bath, May 14.

I SAT down the other day in a retired corner at the bookseller's, to write you my sentiments on the present unhappy situation of public affairs; but I had scarce begun, when being teased and interrupted by a political conversation among four or five gentlemen at the other end of the shop, I was obliged to lay down my pen.

Their discourse seemed to arise from one of them animadverting on the *letter of a Planter*, in your paper, No. 10 [See London Evening, April 18] which pointed at some West-India Governor, who had suggested in Parliament "the inhuman project
" of

“ of exciting the negroes in America to
 “ rise and massacre their masters.” At first
 I endeavoured to give no attention to them,
 but their arguments became so interesting,
 that I could not avoid listening; and tho’
 I lost the beginning, I amused myself by
 taking a considerable part of the remainder
 in short hand; a copy whereof I shall send
 you in the stead of my own intended letter,
 which I could not go on with, and perhaps
 you lose nothing by the change.

The gentlemen were all strangers to me.
 I sometimes missed part of a sentence, nor
 could I always distinguish the identity of
 the speakers, so as to know exactly which,
 and how many of them joined in the con-
 versation, as they were not in my full
 view; whence, neither the matter nor the
 dialogue appear so connected as I could
 wish; for I could only mark the change
 of persons from the changes of voice, by
 the letters A, B, C, &c.

A. Have they any right over their slaves,
 except what the law gives them? And has
 not the law given us a right over them-
 selves, as *our* subjects? Consequently, if
they rebel against *us*, *we* have as good a
 right to reduce *them* to the obedience of
our laws, as *they* have to reduce *their* rebel
 negroes to *theirs*.

B. Very right, Sir, I’m of your mind;
 and so in exciting their negroes to rebel,
 O by

by offering them freedom, we are only playing the back game upon them.

A. With what justice can they palliate or cover the iniquity of their *rebellion*, with the specious pretext of asserting their civil liberty, while they themselves keep so many thousands in slavery?

B. Very right, Sir.

C. If your analogy is perfect; your argument must be good.—Let us see:—The British Americans have a *legal* and an *equitable dominion*, over their *slaves* as their perpetual servants, because they *bought them* under those conditions in a *fair market*, where such *slaves* are *legally* and publicly *sold*.—Did we also *buy* the British planters of America in like manner, and in such a market? Who sold them? Where's the bill of sale?

B. No, no, we give up the analogy.

C. Here then your argument fails in the first outset.

A. That signifies nothing, for I maintain that the diabolical practice of buying or selling slaves, should not be allowed; for to enslave, on any pretence, our fellow-creatures, is contrary to every just idea of humanity, both civil and religious.

B. Very right, Sir, I think so too.

C. Suppose we were to agree with you on that point, will it serve on the present occasion to justify our project of emancipating

pating the negroes in America, in order to enslave their masters? Was this any part of our plan in the beginning of the contest, or was it only a subsequent scheme, an afterthought expedient?

D. And pray is there more humanity in plundering and reducing to poverty and slavery, those who were born and educated to affluence and freedom, than in suffering the illiterate, habituated slave to continue in the station his mind has been naturalized to from his birth, and to labour for the master, that under all circumstances of sickness and age, maintains him and his progeny?

A. I am against all slavery; the very sound of the word slavery is odious to an English ear.

B. Very right, Sir.

D. I would to God that we could say the condition was odious to an English heart. But it is shamefully true, that mankind can patiently submit to be, what they cannot bear to hear named.

B. Very right, very right, Sir. Apropos to that, our demirep-women, who wallow in the pleasures of debauch, are very chaste in their language; and it is their conscious prudery that has banished the licentious dialogue of the last century from the stage.

C. Notwithstanding all that has been said, and is daily repeated, in abhorrence of slavery, can any thing be more evident than that a great part of mankind are most eagerly willing to embrace it? Not indeed quite gratuitously, but generally for a very inconsiderable price: for example, those among the lower sort are ready to sell as much liberty as their indigence has left them for a meal's meat, or a precarious maintenance; and those among the highest rank, either for a paltry bribe, a mere title, or a piece of ribband!

B. Very right, Sir, for a ribband, or a *wryband*!

C. The reason why men are so prone to this vicious weakness, arises either from their passions of vanity and avarice, or from an indolence of mind, that cannot bear the exertions requisite for the preservation of their freedom. Our great models of every thing that was excellent in human knowledge, the GREEKS, a people among whom the honour of freeman was in the highest estimation, knew well that mankind were by their nature distinguished into two classes; the one of those who were *capable*, the other of those who were *incapable* of relishing *freedom*, or of acting as became *freemen*; and therefore they always kept slaves for the low and sordid offices of
life,

life, and had laws proper for the governance of such an order of men.

B. Very right, Sir.

C. The British Americans have followed this wise example: for the abject part of mankind they have established by law an order of *slavery*, whilst the government and defence of their rights as freemen, are intrusted to freemen only, which in this, and other *corrupt countries*, are for the most part in the hands of slaves, or of those who are naturally of the *slave order*.

B. How!—what!—How can we in England trust power in the hands of slaves, when we have no slaves? Our laws, you know, as I have heard——

C. Why, by making slaves of those whom we intrust with arms; for it cannot be denied, that either by law, or by barbarous custom, all our military, both for land and sea service, are in a compleat state of slavery.

A. How slaves! I deny it——articles of war——for life——pressing——arbitrary commands——death——

B. I don't understand what you mean by the *abject part* of mankind, the *slave order*, and those that are incapable of acting as becomes freemen.

C. I mean such base-minded and irregular people, as cannot conduct either their persons or their properties in such manner

as

as should become good citizens, with respect to the community in general, or to themselves and their families in particular.

B. Base-minded——persons and properties——good citizens——

D. Very just! for an incorrigible, profligate, debauchee, squanderer, or gamester, is naturally incapable of freedom. Such vicious or noxious animals should be confined in cart-harness, or chained to a block, not left loose to disturb the peace and good order of the public, and much less to be intrusted with the interests of others, when they have not conduct enough to take care of their own.

B. Soft, soft, my good friends; you tread close on the borders of petty treason, or *scandalum magnatum*—not a word of the —, or the administration, or of the majorities in the two Houses of Parliament; or by inference you may insinuate, that they are all by nature of the *slave order*.

C. Why, Sir, I have gone no farther than to give you the explanatory definition you called for; but I will add to it, by way of instance, that our neighbours in the Netherlands have a law in vigour, and frequently exerted, by which a man of any rank, being convicted of such irregular conduct, is shut up in the prison called the SILLY BROTHERS, and the administration

stration of his affairs is put into the hands of commissioners.

D. This is very true. I was witness to a nobleman being shut up at Bruffels for *squandering* more than his income could afford; and a merchant in Holland, at the suit of his wife and children, for the like indiscretion.

B. Why then, if such a law could be executed here, the follies committed every night at our *macaroni clubs*, though they are not admitted in England as legal proofs of lunacy, would be sufficient to shut up nine-tenths of our Courtiers and Senators among the SILLY BROTHERS.

D. Happy would it have been for this country that they had been there long ago, or that the effects of their follies had been confined to ruining their own fortunes only, and that they had not had it in their power to play such a *fool's game*, with the property and the prosperity of the *commonwealth*, as to put it all on the sad chance of a *single cast*!"

Here the arrival of another gentleman broke in a little on this discourse, or confused it so, that I lost some sentences; but it went on again, and I continued to take it in my notes as before, which I will send you in my next.

ARICONIENSIS.

N U M-

NUMBER XV.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Bath, May 16.

AS soon as the interruption occasioned by the new comer was over, and the discourse became again orderly, by being reduced to one speaker at a time, I resumed my pen, and continued my short hand notes, from which the following is copied.

C. Dark opinions, involved in a confused cloud of incoherent mysteries, are as useful for the support of false politics as of false religions; and such opinions, being once propagated, are more easily supported than opposed; for the acquiescent indolence, natural to the majority of mankind, being unable to bear the exertion of mind necessary to sift out and detect their fallacy, is still further encouraged, by every one observing, that the smiles of the Court are never bestowed so kindly as on the implicit believers, and the defenders of the faith. Hence it is, that so many false topics, framed and common-placed by the retainers of the Court, are trumpeted about again, and circulated by their deluded proselites, as currently as Birmingham counterfeits, few having skill enough,
and

empire, with respect to the Prince as the executive head, extends over all the British kingdoms and provinces ; yet, with respect to the British Parliament, it extends no further, *constitutionally*, than to the lands and their inhabitants, which qualify and *constitute* the representatives, or members who form that Parliament.

D. That is, the community, or empire, under the British Parliament, is *constitutionally* confined, at present, to this island.

C. I can find no rational or *constitutional* authority to suppose it reaches any further at present ; for, where many separate countries, or states, are under the *nominal* rule of one Prince ; and where each has, in conjunction with that Prince, their several separate and independent legislatures, which of these states (not being so *constituted* by common consent) shall arrogate to themselves to be the uncontrollable head, and to call their legislature the *supreme power* of the whole empire ?

D. Suppose, for example, the Parliament of Ireland should take upon them
* * * ?

B. Very right. Sir, that would be *arrogance* indeed !

C. But if we really wish to have a *general* parliamentary supremacy over the whole, as *one community*, a *general consent*, obtained in a *general Congress*, may legally *constitute*

tute such a form of government, and might be a happy improvement on our present motley frame, which, since the extension of our Colonies, seems to have something incongruous in it; but, I think, nothing else can bring this about effectually, *constitutionally*, and satisfactorily. We now feel, that to establish our decrees by force is expensive, perhaps beyond our abilities; the events precarious, and hitherto unfortunate?

B. Very right, Sir; I begin to perceive that the words *constituted*, *constitution*, and *constitutional*, as you apply them, may have some particular and decisive meaning, tho' heretofore I thought them only mere plausible political expletives.

C. Those words, however they may be misapplied, are in their proper sense expressive of something definite, accurate, and precise. Their particular meaning with us, will appear from the further investigation of our present subject, *supreme power*: I say, the *supreme power* in this, and every other country, naturally was, is, and always will be, not in arguments, or in words, in parchment, or on paper, but in the *proprieters* of the *lands*, on which, or out of which, the people at large are maintained.

D. The truth of this is so obvious, that I wonder how it could ever be questioned.

C. For if the proprietors of the lands are strong enough, by the number of themselves and their adherents, to withhold the produce of their grounds from any other part of the people, such other part must become their slaves or dependents, under such conditions as the proprietors shall think fit to allow them. But if the other part of a people should be stronger than the proprietors of the lands and their adherents, and by a general combination should contend with them for the mastery, the property of the land, after the conflict, must remain with the conquerors ; and the vanquished, if they are still to be fed out of the same lands, must either be slaves to the conquerors, or live under such terms of compact, as their success in the contest may have engaged the conquerors to grant ; and, under this compact, they *constitute* the order of their future government, which therefore becomes, and is properly called *the Constitution*. In the old German and Saxon laws, in our Magna Charta, and in the statutes of Edward I. we look for the *stamina* of our *constitution*. There have been many encroachments, infringements, and some alterations, which have called for restitutions and amendments, and more may still be necessary. The *surcrescence* of our Colonies makes a new case, which seems to require a new *constitutional* alteration.

ration. The majority of the proprietors of the lands in America, having now withheld their produce from others who differ from them in opinion, are demonstrating in whose hands the *supreme power* of that country is held.

A. To what does all this argument tend?

B. Very right, Sir; I love short sentences; I never can distinguish any thing clearly, either in a multitude of words, or in a crowd of people.

C. Take a little time, Sir, and your discernment will improve. The component parts of a political system, like those of a crowd, can only be distinguished by examining them separately, and by tracing their connection and dependency in an orderly manner. That the *supreme* legislative power (under which the executive power derives) was *constitutionally* in the whole body of the free proprietors of the lands, who assembled, deliberated, and resolved on all important matters, appears both from our ancient laws and history. The after-invented expedient, of meeting by *representatives*, was in consequence of the community having become too great, and the territory too extensive, to form their general assemblies by the personal attendance of the whole body of proprietors; consequently, in order to preserve the
consti-

constitutional unity of the supreme power, when the land was further extended by *colonization*, a new mode of *general representation* became necessary, and should have taken place; and until that is complied with, the general government must be defective, not to say disorderly and *unconstitutional*.

B. Very right; I begin to comprehend a little.

C. From the increase of territory by colonization, several separate states have been formed with legislative powers similar to the parent state; but having no common band of union, except acknowledging the same Prince, no common Congress, or joint meeting by Representatives, conferring together, and with delegates of the parent state, a Prince might be enabled to play one against the other, or *by bribing the representatives of the most powerful into a voluntary slavery, might endeavour to en- thrall the rest by compulsion.*

A. Oh, I see your scheme;—this would quite alter the constitution;—this would never do.—Who would dare to propose so wild a project? Your new-fangled Congress would supersede—would, I don't know what! quite overturn the constitution!

C. Patience, my good Sir; it is perhaps the only method that, without absolute
amputa-

amputation, can preserve the *constitution*; for when we think any new territory, gained by conquest or colonization, is able and proper to yield a revenue to the commonwealth, if we should then attempt to exact that revenue, without first calling together the land proprietors (or their delegates) of such new acquired territory, and in fair deliberation with them, to consult on ways and means, it appears to me, that we ourselves, by that neglect, would make a breach in the *constitution*. And now, having many such territories, we must, either by some such *constitutional* means, endeavour to unite them, or run the apparent risk of *breaking* all to pieces!

D. If it should come to that, it may perhaps be a fortunate circumstance for the best part of mankind, that the Americans are so strong by their virtue, their numbers, and their distance, as to *resist* both *bribes* and *arms*, whereby an *asylum* may be preserved for such British subjects as prefer liberty to slavery, and the enjoyment of their ancient and fundamental rights.

E. Gentlemen, from what I have heard of your arguments, I believe I can in a few words shew, that by the principles just now laid down, both parties must agree in one opinion; both have already agreed, there must and ought to be a *supreme* governing

verning power somewhere. The gentleman who spoke last but one, insists, the *supreme power* must always be in the *proprietors of the lands*, and that is very true; but we must recollect, that the King is *virtually* the proprietor of all the lands. The conditional grants, both in England and America, our payment of quit rents, and the laws of escheat and forfeiture, prove this beyond a doubt. Now, Sir, the King, as grand proprietor of all the lands, is in himself a *Congress*, a great body politic, which, with fifty or sixty thousand adherents in red or blue coats, will be sufficient to convince us in the clearest manner, that the *supreme* uncontrollable power is now where it properly and legally ought to be.

A. Very true, Sir, that is the only Congress that can restore peace, by reducing the lawless to order.

B. Very right, very right, Sir; I wonder we did not think of this before, for to be sure it is *law*, downright *law*!

C. If a conquering Prince can, under the influence of the sword, persuade an ignorant or pusillanimous people to acknowledge, in *parchment contracts*, that they are to hold all their lands, as of his bounty, liable in many cases to escheat to him and his heirs, such contracts will be valid as long as *public opinion* supports them by its authority, or as long as the will of the Prince

Prince is strengthened by an oppressive army; and, consequently, for so long the Prince will be *virtually* proprietor of all the lands. But can a *virtual* proprietor be also the *actual* possessor and cultivator of all the lands of an extensive empire? Or how long can mankind be persuaded to forego the use of their reason? For, let the army be removed, or let *public opinion* be changed, and then the *actual* possessors of the lands will undoubtedly resume their natural rights, and demonstrate, as the Americans are now doing, that the *supreme* power resides in them, and that *virtual* proprietorship, and *virtual representation*, are equally phantoms.

D. We have the legal and parchment authority of the Declaratory Act, affirming the British Parliament to be the *virtual* representatives of all the British territories. We have, in consequence thereof, *enacted* and *exact*ed; and we have moreover backed our *virtual* powers with the *actual* force of fleets and armies. But the *actual* power and active resistance of the Colonists baffles all our metaphysics, by relying not on *virtual* and hypothetical notions, but on *actual* and natural experiments.

E. Oh, my friend, I do not expect to convince such *croakers* as you.

D. Well, Sir, I admit I am a *croaker*: but, as we all wish for better times, we

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may

may agree to conclude in the words of the old *Roman* crow, who, it seems, in very bad times, croaked in good Greek, *ἔσται πάντα καλῶς*; which, for the use of the vulgar, * Suetonius tells us, was thus expounded,

“ *Nuper Tarpeio quæ sedit culmine cornix,*

“ *EST BENE, non potuit dicere; dixit, ERIT.*”

And accordingly, a few months after, the people (perhaps taking the hint from the crow) found means to remove the cause of their grievances.

A. But suppose this crow language was to be vulgarised a little further, for the use of those who understand English better than Greek or Latin, how would it be in our tongue?

D. Why, it might be paraphrased thus:

“ *A boding crow has lately croak'd on top of Richmond-hill,*

“ *That things go well, he could not say; but croaked, bye and bye they will.*”

B. Very good, very good! Egad, my parrot shall croak the original Greek; I like that the best; I'll go home and teach him directly.

ESTAI PANTA KALOS! ESTAI PANTA KALOS!

Here ended the conversation.

I am, Sir, your's,

ARICONIENSIS.

* In Vitæ Neronis.

N U M-

NUMBER XVI.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

June 6, 1776.

YOU have seen in the papers a petition from the Assembly of Barbadoes to the King. The nations of the East approach their superiors with a present; our Colonies in the West offer incense. The good people of that island, not to derogate from the established custom, introduce their Address to his Majesty with a long preface of compliments; their complaint, the subject matter, they respectfully couch in a few words. To the compliments there is nothing to be objected; they are probably sincere. Not less sincere is the complaint; but being in short, it is to be considered as a text, which it may be necessary to enlarge and expound for the edification of the public. What if the complaint be local! the grievance is general; it is the business, and comes home to the bosom of the Sugar Colonist over all the West-Indies. Nor let the country gentleman in England think to escape. Insensible as he is at present, the blow is struck, which, at all events, irrevocably deprives his manufactures of a large portion of the American market.

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The Assembly, confining themselves to provisions alone, say in their Address, " Their internal resources have failed ; their stock on hand will not last many weeks ; and they are without hope of future foreign supplies."

Before I proceed, allow me to give you a little history, which I have just learned. The people at Barbadoes were so alarmed by the licence granted to General Howe's agent, to carry off all the provisions he could get, that upon the motion for a petition to the King, three different drafts were offered to the committee appointed to prepare it. One of them is published ; another has been put into my hands, as having come from a gentleman whose public spirit and abilities give him an honourable and distinguished ascendancy in the political determinations of the colony. Notwithstanding the House presented the Address, which has appeared in the papers. The fear of a famine was tempered with the fear of offending. Conscious of their own weakness, and well aware of the foreness and irritability of others, they shrunk back from their favourite leader. They shrunk back, because he went forward directly to the main point, and with a manly and decent firmness held out to open view the perilous situation at which they meant only to cast one melancholy glance.

glance. He had even ventured to name America, and to hint at peace upon a broad basis. This was the language of their constituents; it was the language of their hearts; but they were too cautious to give it utterance in a public capacity.

Under certain circumstances, to be cautious is to be wise. Be that the praise of the Barbadoes Assembly; be it mine to be clear and explicit. In this intention, I send you the proposed Address, which startled the Assembly; not that it contradicts, but because it explains; and fortunately anticipating my purpose, is a commentary upon the actual petition. I give it you as such, and shall only subjoin a few remarks.

To the KING's Most Excellent MAJESTY.

Most gracious Sovereign,

WE your Majesty's most faithful subjects, the Representatives of this your ancient and loyal Colony of Barbadoes, humbly beg leave, at length, to throw ourselves at your royal feet. Unwilling as we hitherto have been to add any thing to the weight of your Majesty's cares on the unhappy subject of America, we have maintained a respectful silence; we have kept back from all expression of our fears, until the apprehensions entertained by us are on the point of being realized by the approach-

approaching evils. Confiding in the wisdom of your Majesty's councils, directed by the goodness of your royal heart, we have still flattered ourselves with some happy determination of that dispute betwixt our Mother Country and our brethren upon the Northern continent of America; in which, not only the peculiar interest, but the very support of our own settlement in this Southern latitude, was immediately involved. But what a sad reverse appears! and how afflicting is the condition of our lot! We are suffering without blame, and experiencing all the effects of a resentment, without the slightest imputation on our obedience. We find ourselves on the brink of being ruined in our fortunes; but heavy as that calamity may lie upon our minds, it is yet supportable, in comparison with a more dreadful evil that strikes at our very existence; for at a time when we find ourselves cut off from our long accustomed supplies of food, by the determined measures of your Majesty's Ministers at home, following the example, and supporting the resolves of the North-American Congress; when at this time we are anxiously looking for resources from some other quarter for support, your Majesty will judge of our alarm at the arrival and application of two transport ships from Boston, for a part of those very stores, for the relief

relief of your Majesty's forces there, which we had relied upon for our own scanty provision. How considerably this must hasten the period of our dreaded wants, conspiring as at present with the failure of our few internal aids, from the severity of the season, we are but too painfully sensible! Nor can we forbear, by the most dismal anticipation, to bring the horror of that day into our minds, when we shall behold our miserable slaves, to the number of near eighty thousand, looking up to us for that food, which we shall be unable to hold out to them; and when, from the destruction of their lives, deeply as we must be affected with the irretrievable loss of our properties, we shall yet feel the deeper wound that will be given to our humanity by the shocking scene; and yet happy will it be for us, if our sufferings are ended here! Happy, if our present orderly and submissive slaves, then driven by hunger, and its wonted rage, to rapine and rebellion, do not turn upon ourselves and families, and make us the first dreadful victims in the general sacrifice!

We beseech your Majesty therefore to take this our most deplorable state of danger and suspense into your most gracious consideration, permitting us at the same time to assure your Majesty of our inviolable attachment, from principles of gratitude

titude, no less than duty, to your sacred person and government, professing our undissembled reverence for the constitution of Great Britain, and our highest esteem for that part of it, which brought your Majesty's illustrious ancestor, as a blessing, to the British throne; and concluding with our devout prayers to God, who rules the hearts of kings, that he would guide the councils of your Majesty to those glorious means, which in the same moment they secure to us the preservation of our country, may establish its prosperity likewise on the broad basis of national peace and happiness throughout the realm."

This, Sir, is the condition of Barbadoes. It is soon to be the condition, if it is not already, of all the Sugar Colonies. I appeal to our evidence at the bar of the House of Commons, prophetic of the latest advices. And while all these her submissive children are thus crying out to the Mother Country, for help under the distress into which she has plunged them with her eyes open, while in return for dutious acquiescence, they are looking up to her for adequate protection, what is the relief she has prepared for them in the plenitude of her power, and tenderness of parental cares? She tells them, speaking by the voice of her Ministers, "The Sugar Colonies are in no danger of a famine.
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Corn is cheap in England, and Ireland abounds with provisions. They may depend upon the activity of the merchant, and dismiss their fears." A doctrine like this is exposed, as it deserves, in your late account of the West-India memorial to administration; for in vain may there be corn in Egypt, unless there is money in the sack's mouth. But the doctrine is advanced, merely to evade the difficulty; and in whatever light you view it, it is equally weak. I will grant then the plenty to exist, and I will suppose it to continue. I must go further, and imagine, in the discovery of some hidden resource, a capacity to pay for it. What then? This corn, these provisions, are not to be used upon the spot where they are cheap and in plenty. They are to feed people at the distance of three and four thousand miles, and in a climate for which they must be particularly prepared. Before they reach the consumer, they must pass through a multitude of hands, each of them entitled to a just profit. When Ministers therefore talk of the cheapness and plenty in Europe of the food which is to be carried across the Atlantic, they deserve to be insulted by a reference to their own experience. Let them look into their Boston accounts for the cheapness, and enquire of the garrison about the plenty! But my design is

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honest information, and I will not impose a delusive estimate. Two objects are combined to swell the price in those accounts. A government contract is a kind of a political sacrament; there is the outward and visible service to the public, and the inward and secret grace to the individual. From jobs I shall draw no conclusions; my calculations are made upon the common practice of business. Without troubling your reader with a tedious detail of articles, or the difference of exchange, I will venture to assert, with submission to the greater authority of the *West-India Merchant*, that fifty per cent. will be added to the price, from the prime cost, to the consumer in the West-Indies. Nor is this all. The West-Indies, while the harmony of the empire subsisted, were supplied from America. The prime cost of provisions in America was infinitely lower than in the British islands, either formerly, or at present, and the navigation unexpensive in proportion. Another fifty per cent. would hardly be equal to the loss to the sugar colonies, in the difference of the two markets. Behold then the boasted plenty and cheapness in its effects! The planter must pay double the usual price for his daily food. Let every man here go to a market, God forbid in the same predicament, but with the same idea; and I may trust the
most

most sanguine addresser for blood of them all, to judge between administration and the Sugar Colonies. Will he dare to pronounce this state to be in no degree a state of famine? But the food of the Negroes, and of most of the common people, is *maize*. The foreign supply is now no more; the internal resource too frequently fails, and wheat remains for a substitute. The price of wheat to maize is as three to one. Shall then the labouring poor, and those who stand in their place, have no bread to eat, except they buy such as is always three times as dear as their common bread, and is itself at that juncture necessarily doubled in price? Shall the maintenance of the man in these ranks of life be raised to sixfold! And will Ministers gravely tell us, "There is no danger of a famine in the Sugar Colonies; that corn is cheap in England, and Ireland has plenty of provisions?" It is a solemn mockery of our misfortunes. But I have done, and will not trespass against your rules.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A SUGAR COLONIST.

Lloyd's, June 8, 1776.

As the *Sugar Colonist* refers his computation of the advanced price, beyond prime cost, on provisions sent from hence to the

West-Indies, to my judgment, I am sorry to inform him, that he has made it 50 per cent. below the truth. The flour which I shipped some weeks ago, taking in the price of casks, freight, commission, insurance, and all charges, cannot be sold in the islands less than a hundred per cent. beyond its cost in London.

As to the little regard shewn to the Barbadoes petition, though it has been given out, that the Ministers were influenced in that matter by advices from the Governor, who was of opinion the planters had no just ground for their fears, I think it appears from the subsequent conduct of that same Governor, in seizing two vessels bound with provisions for other islands, and obliging them to sell their cargoes in Barbadoes, that he could not have been the author of such false and deceitful advice.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R X V I I .

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

June 21, 1776.

IN my last I broke from you rather abruptly, but I return immediately. I am urged to it by an account at Liverpoole, that a ship from thence, with provisions for Jamaica, having touched at Barbadoes in her way, had been detained, and obliged
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to sell her cargo. Another, from a different port, intended for Antigua, has shared the same fate. You have intimated those facts already; give me leave to enlarge upon them.

Say the gentlemen injured, "Is Barbadoes taking advantage of her situation to windward of all the West-Indies, to intercept the supplies provided for the others? Will these people plead the necessity of the measure in excuse for its violence? They cannot. The necessity was created by themselves; and when they stripped their country of provisions to serve the army at Boston, they ought to have known, that although it might have been a moot point at the Robinhood, whether his Majesty's garrison, or his Majesty's colony, should be starved, yet in the colony itself there could be no dispute."

It must be owned, however, and it appears by the history in my last letter, that it was not the people who decided against themselves. It was their Governor. He, in the true spirit of his superiors at home, determined, that the troops making war with America were to be favoured, altho' the people committed to his care were to perish. And let me tell the gentlemen, whose provisions have been taken from them, that the merit of having run all hazards to favour the army, will sanctify the

the invasion of their property. It will be considered as a prudent and just atonement from the Governor to his people, for the mischief he had done; and that it was meet and right in him, to make his own peace with them, although he should have bought it at the expence of his neighbours.

It is not my design, Sir, to examine the Governor's conduct. Let others applaud, or censure it, as it may correspond with their principles; it was certainly attended with difficulties. I hold it up to public view, only to shew some of the difficulties growing out of the American war, and immediately distressing the West-Indies. An army is sent out to conquer. It is in danger of being starved. To save the army, Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, for Mr. Howe's agent made a general sweep, are reduced to a degree of famine. Wretched alternative! not to have averted the calamity, but only to have shifted it, from the army at Boston to the unoffending planter in the islands! The planter in one island feeling his distress, seizes the provisions he finds within his reach, and robs even a brother planter of a neighbouring island, pethaps in equal want with himself. Imagine, Sir, the confusions springing from reprisals, which resentment might provoke, or necessity justify!

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But a sense of their weakness forbids the idea; and the same imbecility is a pledge for their tameness, although it should continue to be the good pleasure of this country, to pave its way to the conquest of the continent, with the ruins of the island colonies. The narrative I have given, is also useful in another point of view. It is a substantial proof of the fact, which makes the principal subject of my last letter, the dearness and scarcity of provisions in the West-Indies; a dearness and scarcity foretold in our petition to Parliament, and now actually come to pass, as was foretold. Let then the incredulous country gentleman reflect upon the other misfortunes prognosticated by the same prophetic spirit. Some of them bear a most material relation to himself. He will do well to meditate, in a solitary hour, how far the sudden accomplishment, in part, of a solemn prediction, drawn from the nature of things, is an earnest of the future accomplishment of the whole. And I beg leave to offer him some farther matter for the employment of a few serious moments. Whatever he may think of America, the West-Indies are void of offence. Is it then consistent with religion or humanity, to destroy the innocent, because their destruction may operate eventually as a punishment to the guilty? Are five hundred thousand

thousand persons to be starved, and a property, from thirty to sixty millions, rendered unprofitable or precarious, that America may lose the advantage of selling them food and necessaries? Be the legislature of Great-Britain to the West-Indies, as the Sovereign to the subject; the subject has certain sacred rights, which the Sovereign is bound to respect. I lay this upon the mind of the country gentleman, as a case of conscience. If he has any doubts, let him not rest the solution simply with the Sugar Colonist, indignantly smarting under the lash of oppression. Let him consult a man, who, eminent for integrity, knowledge, and abilities, has no bias, except what may rather incline towards the church and state of this kingdom. I mean the Royal Professor of Divinity in one of its learned Universities*. The Reverend Doctor will tell him, "The power of every legislature upon earth, even of the most uncorrupt and uninfluenced, is in its very nature fiduciary, and of consequence not omnipotent. It stands itself in a certain relation of infinite inferiority to the God of Nature, whose laws it cannot transgress without impiety; it stands in another relation of perfect equality to every other independent state, whose rights it cannot

* See Dr. Watson's sermon on the 29th of May, before the University of Cambridge.

violate

violate without injustice ; it stands in another relation of conditional superiority to its own subjects, whose general interests it cannot oppose without tyranny ; for there may be a tyranny of the whole legislature, as well as of one of its members."

I have quoted the words apposite to my purpose, not with the intention of a formal application (it swims upon the surface) but to tempt my country gentleman, and you, Sir, to read the sermon itself. It will make ample amends to you both, in the solidity of thought and elegance of expression, for the defects of

Your humble servant,

A SUGAR COLONIST.

Lloyd's, June 25, 1776.

MY worthy correspondent, the Sugar Colonist, writes like a man who feels for the distresses affecting himself and his compatriots ; but, alas ! he is only throwing away his labour in addresses to our country gentlemen, who are visibly so immersed in the soft intoxicating sensualities of this elegant and luxurious age, that they have no appetite for reading sermons, or inclination to fatigue themselves in studying or examining cases of conscience. As to the calamity now fallen on the unoffending

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West-Indians, the scene of it is too remote to be felt for, at present, by the inhabitants of Great-Britain. I recollect one of my correspondents, (No. 5, Feb. 13.) compared us to a family who had set their house on fire in a drunken frolic. Let us continue his allusion, and suppose these drunken wise-acres thought it proper at last to blow their fire out with gunpowder; that is, to blow up a part of their building to stop the farther progress of the flame, when some one puts them in mind, that they have laid their powder in such a manner as to blow up an outhouse, not touched by the fire, with some of the family in it, "*D—n 'em, says the 'Squire, let 'em go; our business now is to save the body of the house!*"

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R X V I I I .

Mr. Miller,

July 10, 1776.

WHILE I was airing myself last Saturday evening in St. James's Park, foreseeing a shower of rain, I retreated to the Smyrna coffee-house for shelter, where I found a set of politicians, some of whom were deciding the fate of the rebel colonies with great confidence and seem-

seeming satisfaction.—“ You may take my word for it (said a gentleman with a cockade) that by this time there’s not a man of them in the whole extent of Canada. You see by their own account, how they fled with precipitation, and left all their cannon, their arms, and their sick behind them.” “ I see (answered another gentleman) the Philadelphia Gazette does not endeavour to deceive the people by false accounts, or by suppressing the detail of mortifying events ; but with all this we have no authority to suppose the Provincials have retreated any further than to their stronger posts, where they may be reinforced. We should wait for more decisive intelligence, before we venture to proclaim our triumphs with so much confidence ; and indeed what grounds have we for triumph ? When the most we can boast of is, that we have got footing in part of a province, which the power of France was not able to maintain against a small army, principally of Provincials, fifteen years ago ; and that we hope from thence to begin to make a conquest of the *thirteen united provinces*, defended as they are by a hundred and fifty thousand men, and covered by woods, lakes, rivers, and mountains, in extent larger than all Europe ! I think, added he, we have now seen the name of this Colonel Campbell

in two accounts of retreats. I suppose he was the commander of this last, as well as of the former, from the walls of Quebec the day Montgomery fell." When, to my great astonishment, a tall old gentleman, with a strong Scotch accent, cried out, " Oh, a Caumpbell, a Caumpbell ! Oh, by G——, they should naw ha trausted hem a second time ! " " But (said another gentleman) let things go as they may in Canada, I find by the West-India Merchant's account, that our sugar islands are in a most deplorable situation, and in great danger of being starved, since their supplies from North-America have been cut off." " Aye (said another) but who is this West-India Merchant ? He's not one of the Shelburnes, nor one of the Rockinghams ; he's certainly an obscure fellow, of no party, or at least none of them own him." " Of naw party ! (said the old Scotchman) of naw party ! Is he the worse man, because he's of naw *fawction* ? I say, he is the more worthy to be lastened to, that he delivers his santiments *nullius in verba magistri*. Whan I rad that wall reasoned pamphlet of Dr Price, I should aw had moe respaect for the author, if he had naw woven the panegyric of his patron intil his work : The honest Wast-India Marchant, not craving the patronage or pansion of any *fawction*, does naw want to be knawn by
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any one." "Pho, pho (said another Scotch gentleman) I ken the man vary weel; he is a veefionary ceetizen, that has ruined his family by projecting in the new islands; I ha' forgotten his name, but you may see him any day at Lloyd's coffee-house." Though this fellow was boldly advancing a falsehood, for he certainly knew me not, yet I did not think proper to remain any longer there, while such a scrutiny was carrying on, lest some one should chance to come in, who knew more of me than this forward voucher; therefore, the shower being past, I stepped up to the bar, paid for my coffee, and returned to my walk.

From the short conversation I heard in the coffee-house, I could not help reflecting with myself, that the opposition to the present unhappy measures being divided into the many factions of Rockinghams, Shelburnes, Graftons, Temples, &c. at the Court end of the town, with the underplots of Bill of Rights and Constitutional Clubs in the City, gives us reason to suspect, that whilst eminent men are so selfishly engaged in private emulations, as to maintain separate *cabals*, they are either deficient in public virtue, or not sufficiently apprised of the common danger of that deluge of approaching misfortune, with which they are all likely to be overwhelmed. It was by an infatuation of this kind, that
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the honest General Ludlow, from his jealousy of General Lambert, or from his unseasonable delicacy of refusing (when the liberties of his country were sinking under Monk's treacherous invasion) to join with a man whose morals he disapproved of, suffered a greater villain to become master of the field, and thereby the nation to submit to the same kind of tyranny, against which it had so long contended.

The absurd secession of the Constitutional Society from the Bill of Rights, or the *Horn-ets* from the *Wilkites*, puts me in mind of the implacable animosity of the Liliputian Empress, and her faction against Gulliver, for his manner of saving her palace, by extinguishing the fire with such filthy water, and so indecent an engine; for assuredly, though Wilkes, in the eyes of the Hornet-stung Seceders, might appear as an indelicate engine, yet he had proved himself to be a very able and useful one to play on that fire, which by this ill-judged and ill-timed division has now risen to a dangerous height.

The faithful Dutch historian, Emanuel Meteren, tells us, that "in the year 1555, while the Low Countries and Spain were yet one nation, a furious sea fight happened off Calais and Dover, between 23 Dutch merchant ships coming from Spain, associated in a squadron for mutual defence, and
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19 French men of war, with six or seven brigantines; which French men of war, linking themselves ship to ship with chains, endeavoured to board the Dutchmen, who also kept so close together, that they fought almost hand to hand, as if they had been on shore. The Dutch ships were taller and stronger than the French, which were however better manned and better equipped; in fine, after a close combat of six hours, one of the vessels taking fire, the flames were quickly communicated to almost all the rest, before they could get loose from each other; so that the battle immediately ceased, every one then only thinking how to save himself from the conflagration. Many jumped into the sea, and swimming to the nearest vessel free from fire, whether friend or enemy, were all received without distinction." And surely it was nothing more than natural, that the quarrel between the partizans of two neighbour nations, which in its ultimate view admitted of some temperament, should necessarily cease, and be converted instantaneously into a league of mutual assistance, whilst both were attacked by a common and relentless enemy: But the folly of the modern disunited Patriots, the false delicacy of General 'Ludlow, and of the Empress of Liliput, can only find their parallels among

mong people, who shew by their manners that they are ripe for destruction or slavery.

Though one of the gentlemen in the coffee-house mentioned me in a style of contempt, as an obscure person, because he could not find I was enlisted under any of the *cabals*, I protest I felt no shame for myself on that account, but much for the generality of my countrymen, who are so far debased by the influence of slavish ideas, as to think the pageantry of titles, conferred by a pageant, more estimable and honourable than the inflexible integrity and candour of an independent mind. But I own, Mr. Miller, the generous sentiment of the old Scotch gentleman (who little thought I was within hearing) flattered me agreeably, as indeed he spoke the truth. I point not my arrows, such as they are, against men, but against measures; nor do I write to flatter the heads of opposition, but to warn and instruct, as far as I can, men in power; and, God knows, the experience of every day shews how much they want it. The British dominions, in the beginning of this century, leagued with almost all the powers of Europe, were scarce a match for France alone. Our colonies were then in their nonage, and the profits derived from them, inconsiderable. In the year 1760, they were so far advanced towards maturity, that, enriched by
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their commerce, and strengthened by their arms and their mariners, the British empire was an over-match for the combined houses of France, Spain, and Austria. But now the wild projects of administration have driven those provinces, the fountains of our wealth and of our modern power, into revolt, to renounce their allegiance to the Crown, to meet us in arms, and even to shew they have power or prowess sufficient to baffle all our force by sea and land; and yet we are still blindly pursuing a passionate, absurd plan (which no man owns) without seeming to perceive that we are hurrying on headlong to our ruin; that we have already lost near half our estate, and that the rest is left an almost defenceless prey to the first bold invader. In the mean while, our great men are as brave as they are blind, and in their jollity the burden of their song is, *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum!* “Are then these great men secure against the effects of the *ruat cælum?*” Oh, yes, they have brought the arts of corruption to so high a degree of perfection, that though twelve millions of nominally free people, may find themselves driven to the verge of a precipice, by the detestable machinations, or by the folly, or the obstinacy of perhaps *one man*, they know not how to help themselves!—“But may they not have some comfort in prospect,

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by considering that every vicious excess brings on at last a remedy against itself ; and that the downfall of a corrupt system, may, ere long, give place to a better ?" Perhaps they may ; for though in common language we talk of the ruin and destruction of nations, we do not mean that the *matter*, that is, the land and the people, are exterminated, (though some royal Ministers and Generals have vainly exerted their utmost efforts for that purpose,) but that their political *form* is changed, one form of government being destroyed, and another created. So, when Tarquin was expelled by the first Brutus, the *Monarchy* of Rome was destroyed, and a *commonwealth* was established in its stead. And when the seven Low Dutch provinces united and revolted from the proud, obstinate, and over-bearing Spaniard, the *royal domination* over them was destroyed, and a *flourishing republic* was erected in its room, which continues a populous, wealthy, and powerful state to this day ; while the other ten provinces, that submitted to the bribes and oppressions of the royal Ministers, though possessing the most fertile soil in Europe, have languished in poverty and obscurity ever since, distinguished only by being sometimes the seat of war, in which the poor inhabitants themselves have no immediate concern, but that their

their country lies unhappily convenient for contending neighbours to ravage and to fight in.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R X I X .

TO THE WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

August 10, 1776.

WHEN the American Congress was appointed, our West-India people modestly represented to Parliament, their apprehensions of the fatal consequences of the quarrel, which was then become very serious. Those apprehensions have since been treated as groundless. It was asserted, the gloomy predictions had not been verified by the event; for the manufacturers throughout the kingdom, had all been in full employment. I observed at the time, that although it might be said with Cæsar, "the Ides of March are come," it could have been answered with the soothsayer, "True, Cæsar, but they are not past." I will not repeat what I added upon the subject, in explanation of the seeming contrariety. The curious, or the incredulous, may see it in your sixth number.* Whe-

* To save the reader the trouble of searching for No. 6, (in London Evening, Feb. 17.) which perhaps may not be easily had at this distance of time, I find;

Whether the manufacturers were at that period in full employment, or not, it is needless to examine. That they do not continue in full employment at present, no private man can absolutely demonstrate nor contradict. The truth depends upon a multitude of facts, to be carefully and impartially collected. But there is evidence of another nature, sufficient for a mind which is open to conviction.

You know, Sir, the *Long Room* at the Custom-House. When I came home to England, it was before these troubles, I was led to visit it, as a sight the world could not match. I admired the exactness

upon looking over that paper, the Sugar Colonist remarks, that the manufacturers being still employed, was owing to the following temporary accidents: Furnishing the Spanish *flota* with all sorts of goods; Peace between Russia and the Turks; gave rise to some new and unexpected demands in trade. The Americans, previous to shutting their ports against English goods, had laid in a stock that exhausted all our magazines, and which our manufacturers are employed to replenish. The licences from government filled the transport ships, and other vessels with goods, as well to supply our army as occasionally to be smuggled into the provinces. Large remittances from the North-Americans, towards paying off their balances, having reached the master manufacturers, have enabled them to continue their workmen in employment, hoping that things may soon return to their former order. And "thus, says he, the great wheel of commerce continues its revolutions, for some time after the power which originally gave and continued its motions, has ceased to operate."

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and regularity, but was astonished at the multiplicity and variety of the business. The difference now is striking; it is remarked by every eye. The order and arrangements remain, but the hurry is over. The eagerness for dispatch, and the celerity with which it was given, are at an end, with the necessity for both. The clerks on all sides transact their affairs with great tranquillity; and a stranger can traverse the ground without impediment.

From the Long Room, I direct my steps to the quays and warehouses appropriated to the North-American trade. Some of these, I am informed, have been lett for 1500l. a year. I see the quays solitary, and the warehouses empty.

Such are the triumphs of the American war!

Instead of a simple assertion, as formerly, I have lately been pressed with an argument. It was first mentioned in an honourable assembly. Stated with a semblance of candour, and supported by the highest official authority; it has weight. It is, that the produce of the sinking fund had increased, and that the increase was owing to the greater consumption of the commodities subject to Customs and Excises. A great deal of pains was taken to establish this particular point, in order to deduce an inference, that although the American

merican trade might be valuable, yet its loss had been amply compensated by acquisitions in other branches.

The noble Lord who first mentioned it is justly entitled to applause, for the diligence of his researches into the detail of the revenues committed to his charge. I honour the sedulous caution, no less becoming in a statesman, than in a philosopher, with which he proceeded to investigate the grounds of an opinion favourable to his system. (As a lurking fallacy might have conspired with his wishes to betray his judgment, I admire the ingenuity exercised as successfully in the escape from error, as in the discovery of truth; and giving entire credit to all his assertions, I congratulate him upon the result. His conclusion is just, that the increase of the produce of the sinking fund had been owing to the greater consumption of commodities subject to Customs and Excises; and I join in the inference, that the loss of the American trade had been compensated, I mean *to the Exchequer*, by other acquisitions.

See the advantageous ground on which I place the argument of the noble Lord! I grant the premises, and I allow the conclusion. I only add one gentle qualification, viz. "I mean *to the Exchequer*." It confines the universality of the conclusion to the

the particulars assumed in the premises; and this logic, which will be good at Oxford, must be good at Whitehall. The Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot differ from the Chancellor of the University.

What is there then in this argument, to prove that all the manufacturers are in full employment? Or, that the acquisition to the Exchequer, is a solid benefit to the nation? It only proves, there is upon the whole an increase of employment amongst the consumers of commodities subject to Customs and Excises. Let us examine who these consumers are, and what may be their employment.

It is natural to begin at home. The Sugar Colonist sees a great increase in the trade to the West-Indies. The ships, which were accustomed to leave this country in ballast, you are sensible, Sir, now go out with full loadings. They carry the substitutes for those commodities, with which the islands were supplied by the continent. The new supplies (they disgrace the name) are indeed inadequate to quantity, and excessive in price. What of that? Be the property of the Sugar Colonies rendered unprofitable, as it is precarious! Be the inhabitants reduced to the miseries of famine! the receipt of the Exchequer is, nevertheless augmented in the instant; their convulsive efforts in the last gasp, exceed

ceed their powers in the vigour of health. I trust there is no true English merchant, who can contemplate without pain the commissions he draws upon the orders from his correspondents, or the profits he makes upon the sales of his own adventures ; but the unhappy transaction certainly gives employment to the consumers of commodities subject to Customs and Excises *.

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* If my worthy correspondent expects me to answer candidly, I must fairly own, though I compassionate the miseries I see falling on the planters, he must not expect me to carry my feeling farther than an apothecary does his concern for the sufferings of his patients, but who, nevertheless, cannot give his drugs and attendance *gratis*, having nothing besides his profession to live by.

I acknowledge the commissions and profits, which I now draw, on the extravagantly dear provisions and stores sent from Europe, instead of America, are so far a *douceur* to me as a merchant, as they for the present remove the thorn of the war from my foot, by sticking it into the planter ; that I have been very lucratively employed in my compting-house and on 'Change, in chartering ships, and sending out such cargoes to the West-Indies as we never sent before, is the true reason that you have heard nothing from me for this month past.

But however comfortable it may be to me, to see the profits of this temporary trade rising so fast, I am not without gloomy apprehensions of how it may end. I have large balances due to me ; my present extraordinary profits cause these balances to increase ! The Congress have certainly declared the 13 provinces a free and independent state ! The French and Spaniards

Another branch of commerce increasing rapidly, is that of the East country. Germany and the Baltic are the resources to replace the wood, the iron, and some other articles of the merchandize of America, more especially the naval stores for the public, and for private use. It was a trade, originally all their own. They look upon America as a successful rival, and will rejoice in her fall. No wonder they readily lend their helping hands to forward her destruction. I believe the *great Catharine* will persist in resisting the temptation in every seducing shape. I therefore do her the justice to except her; it is a high compliment to be made her virtue, at the expence of her interest. That this interest was perfectly well understood upon the Royal-Exchange, I appeal to the names subscribed to the London Address for blood, among which were those of many merchants trading to Russia, the Baltic, and the East countries.

But neither the struggles of the distressed West Indies, nor the rising prosperity of the East country, are sufficient to fill up the mighty void in the Long Room at the Custom-House, nor to reconcile that void with the overflowings of the sinking fund.

Spaniards are mysteriously providing great fleets! What if the Sugar Colonies, under the pressure of so many difficulties, should—I dare not say what I apprehend!—But my dream!—That horrid dream, which I communicated to you in my first letter (London Evening, January 9.) is never out of my head!

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There is, however, a trade, Sir, which can explain the phenomenon. This trade is the trade of war. The capital to carry it on, in cash and in credit, is the excess of the national expenditure beyond the ordinary charge of government. Estimate the trade of America at the highest, it was only four millions. Take this at the lowest, it is six. Without troubling any Custom house, these six millions will give employment to a greater number of the consumers of commodities subject to Customs and Excises, and thus increase the produce of the sinking fund *. It does more. It can afford to a favourite honourable contractor, two hundred thousand pounds, in the profits of this year and the last. It can give a Chamberlain to the city, in spite of Wilkes and all his adherents of high

* I remember *the King's friend* from the Cocoa Tree (No. 5, London Evening, February 13.) told us, by a jocular simile, he thought the present stir of business (the effect of supplying a great armament by sea and land) was like the industrious hurry of a family throwing their goods out of doors and windows, after setting their house on fire in a drunken frolic.

But my ingenious correspondent, the Sugar Colonist, shews us demonstratively, by an undeniable calculation, that a war which consumes more money, than the whole amount in value of the late American trade, must create more business, and be immediately more profitable to individuals, than was that lost trade, however ruinous this war trade must be to the nation at large, and to the landed interest in the end.

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and low degree ; and throw a Sheriff for Middlesex into the bargain.

I should be ungrateful not to enumerate another of its powerful effects. The Sugar Colonies owe it to these six millions expended in the trade of war, that their rum is not altogether without a price, miserable as that price may be.

Although the trade of war may answer all these purposes I have mentioned, it is distinguished from other trades by a characteristic defect. It makes no returns of profit, and annually consumes an immense capital. As soon as those who are to furnish it, grow weary of the charge, then, and perhaps not till then, not only the sinking fund will cease to augment, but the gloomy predictions of Mr. Glover, now despised as chimerical, will take place in all their latitude.

From the West-Indies, in a short time, whether the nation continues, or forbears to support the war, little or nothing of consequence is to be expected. Exhausted and neglected, enraged and ruined, they can only be desperate.

As to the trade to Germany and the Baltic, it will continue. It will continue at the pitch to which it rises upon the ruins of the American commerce. How profitable it may prove in the issue, depends upon the good pleasure of the despotic So-

vereigns, who govern those countries. The time may return, when in the day of your necessity you may not be allowed to buy even a barrel of tar.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A SUGAR COLONIST.

N U M B E R X X .

August 20, 1776.

I DINED last Sunday with my friend *Hortensius* in the neighbourhood of Portman Square, whose roast beef being a kind of public dinner for such of his friends as will give him their company without formality, I often meet there with five or six people of different casts or connections; and as it was a week after the Gazette account of the declaration of the independency of the *United States of America*; a declaration which I apprehend as a death warrant against the power and prosperity of this empire, I was curious to see what might be the countenances of folks at the West end of the town, on so extraordinary an event, after a week's reflection; and whether it would wake them from that insensibility with which they had been so long benumbed. I was amazed to find the company talking only of the weather,

ther, and such like ordinary subjects, till dinner being over, a Scotch gentleman observed, that not having been in London since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, he was astonished at the enormous increase of the buildings, not only here, but in all the towns he had passed through in his tour from Scotland ; for he had made many excursions to right and left, to revisit persons and places of his former acquaintance, where he had been quartered when he was in the army. “ I spent (said he) six hours yesterday in walking through the new streets between May-fair and Tottenham-court-road, and could not help making very grave reflections with myself, of what should become of all these buildings, their inhabitants, and the wretched artificers, who are now rapidly hurrying on with more, if we should not be able to make a good peace with the United States of America.” “ Ha ! ha ! ha ! the United States of America ! (said a plump gentleman, who has a considerable post in the Pay-office) why we shall conquer them, and by a wholesome bleeding, restore them to their right senses, so as to have no more trouble with them during our time !” “ Well then (answered the Scotch gentleman) I suppose we shall send our victorious fleet and army immediately after to conquer the Holy Land, and restore to the honour and dignity of

of the Crown, the rights of King Richard the First. The Holy Land is not so far off as America; we have many good bating places by the way, by means of which our army may be much easier supplied with provisions, necessaries, and all the *attirail de guerre*; for I may be bold to say, if we are so sure of conquering such an extent of nations, as we have to encounter in America, the conquest of Palestine, a little corner of Asia, will be comparatively a mere pastime. However, as the events of war are always doubtful, if we should happen neither to subdue, nor to reconcile the American States, I have met with many people in my country, who, not worshipping, nor following the opinions of our Court-serving Thanes, think we are precipitating the empire from the height of prosperity into an abyss of ruin," "Sir, (said an elderly gentleman who sat opposite to him) your remark goes to my heart; I have passed the greatest part of my life in the building branch of business, brought up to it under my father; fifty years ago people were afraid we were over doing it, but my father said then, he remembered the same fear for the new buildings of Hanover-square, which, however, took very well, and are now, I may say, in the heart of the town, and so we went on; but, for all that, I took fright myself ten years ago, and stopped my
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my hand, when I had realized the ground rents of fourscore good houses. Sir, in these three joining parishes, there are eight thousand new foundations within the last fifty years, and most of them are genteel houses. In our business, we are used to speculate and to calculate ; and though I am not much of a scholar in other matters, and may not express myself very properly, if you'll not think me tedious, I'll tell you why I left off the building business." Our host observing some of the company were smiling or sneering, said, " Pray, Mr. Architrave, go on ; there are some gentlemen here will be extremely glad to hear the observations of a man of your great experimental knowledge." " Well, Sir, it was always a question among us, "*where did all the people come from that inhabited these new houses ?*" " And upon this, I remember my father told me forty years ago, that after establishing the public funds on a national debt in the reign of King William, and the great increase of them in Queen Ann's time, many people who had their estates in the stocks, and no land or country seats, became the occupiers of the new buildings ; and whether these were persons who had made their fortunes by the jobs of those two wars, or old country families who had changed their estates from lands to the funds, by having sold to those jobbers ;

bers ; that came all to the same end. And, by my own experience, I have since observed, that the increase of new buildings in London, Bath, and all over the kingdom, has kept pace with every addition to the national debt. But I must also add, that among the occupiers of the new buildings, we have had a great accession of Colonists, especially West-Indians, within the last 50 years. But, said I to myself, this can't go on for ever ; and so when I saw how matters were going between us and the Colonies, and I myself was growing into years, I thought it was a proper time to stop my hand, and, I thank God, I see no reason to repent it ; for if we admit that London and Westminster, that is, this metropolis, is increased by only twelve thousand new foundations within the last fifty years (though I am sure it is much beyond that) the increase of new foundations in the rest of the kingdom, must be at least five times as many (for the metropolis is generally thought to be only one-tenth of the kingdom) then the whole number of new foundations in the last fifty years, excluding all cottages, will be seventy-two thousand, which cannot be inhabited on an average by less than eight persons to each house, making the number of 576,000 inhabitants ; for maintenance of whom, we cannot allow less than 4ol.
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a-head per annum ; because their spendings for house rent, cloathing, and all other necessities, whether masters, children, or servants, must also afford maintenance for the artificers, husbandmen, &c. who prepare and provide for them ; so that the whole spendings of the inhabitants of these 72,000 additional houses, will amount to about twenty-three millions per annum. Now, Gentlemen, let us deduct from this the whole amount of the fund rents, as if all the proprietors of the public funds lived in these additional new buildings, and for a round sum, say five millions. There will then remain eighteen millions a year, which must be admitted to be the income of those who live on the additional profits of our trade and colonization, as increased within these last fifty years. Farther than this I did not think it necessary to look, for from the number of Colonists which I knew were among the tenants of the new buildings of London and Bath, and from the number and affluence of the people employed in the Colony trade at Bristol and Liverpool, it appeared sufficiently plain to me, that if we persisted in our new-fangled scheme of taxing and dragooning the Colonies, something would happen like the bursting of the bubble in the year 1720, to dash the prosperity we have so long enjoyed ; for, thought I, though London,

bounded by Highgate and Blackheath, and extending from Brentford to Bow, might not be too large, as the metropolis of British Europe and America, it is already by much too rickety a head to be supported by the feeble resources of little Old England, when left to itself! And so, Gentlemen, when I saw these projects were likely to be persisted in, I stopped my hand. Gentlemen, I am no scholar, I never got beyond my *as in presenti*, but I have carefully read those excellent treatises of Sir William Petty, called *Political Arithmetic*, which it is plain our wise ministers never did, or else by the help of that study, they might perhaps have discovered, twelve months ago, that having divested themselves of the American marine, they could neither find a sufficiency of shipping to transport their army, nor of sailors to man their fleet. But I am afraid the unhappy acquiescing landlords of this kingdom, without any study at all, will, ere long, be fatally convinced, that they must pay severely for the ignorance and obstinacy of their leaders." "Mr. Architrave (said the Scotch Gentleman) we are much obliged to you for the information and estimates you have furnished us with, in which I am persuaded you are rather below than above the truth. I read at Glasgow the evidence laid before Parliament by the
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West-Indians, as arranged and summoned up by their agent, Mr. Glover. In that, it appeared, the whole exports from Britain to all the world, were in value sixteen millions sterling, of which the American and West Indian Colonies took off goods to the amount of five millions and a half per annum, besides the profits we received by so many of the rich planters and their factor merchants, residing and spending their incomes here: Wherefore, as you have stated that eighteen millions per ann. in our national spendings, are to be put to the account of our increased profits by trade and colonization within fifty years past, it allows, that the proportional part of ~~these~~ eighteen millions, to be placed to the credit of our Colony trade, and the spendings of the planters and factors residing here, must be at least six millions and a half; all which we must inevitably lose, and the planters must banish themselves to their several islands, unless we can make a good peace with The United States. Let us compute what we may lose by this: Why, six millions and a half per ann. taken from the nation, suppose at four per cent. would be equal to the loss of a capital of an hundred and sixty millions and a half!" "Come, my friends (said Hortensius) let us drink a good and speedy peace with The United States." Upon which

the gentleman of the Pay-office said, "Provided we drub them into an humble submission first." "Pho, pho, (answered our host) Mr. Pounce, you had better take example by your old friend, Mr. Architrave, and rather wish to secure what you have gotten in the good times past, than to risk losing if bad times should come; but I recollect, gentlemen in your station risk little or nothing; for as your profits arise from poundage and fees, the greater the national squanderings are, the greater will be your gains. The necks of some of you, indeed, may be eventually in danger; and if, by the untoward issue of the present projects, our finances should drop to the state they were in at the revolution, none of your places will be so very desirable; not even the auditorship of the Exchequer, in expectation of which, it is believed, one of your masters has acted against his conscience, to the risk of his life and fortune." "Well, well, (said Mr. Pounce) when we are in Rome, we must do as Rome does: here's a good and speedy peace with the United—ptz—tz—tz,—Zounds, I can't say it without laughing—the United States!—D—n them, they had liked to have choaked me." "Mr. Architrave (said the Scotch gentleman) you very properly observed, that the inhabitants of great towns, both masters and servants, in their spendings, must

must pay their proportion to the maintenance of the husbandman, and of every other trade and profession in the whole community. Pray what do you suppose the annual expence of every individual, children and paupers included, to be at this time? Your favourite author computed it, as I remember, to about seven pounds a-head." "He did so, Sir, (answered Mr. Architrave) but we were neither so rich, nor so poor, in his time, as we have been since. The art of pawning posterity by packed Parliaments, was not in practice; we had then no national debt of 140 or 150 millions, nor could this kingdom have borne it, for our Colony trade was then only in its infancy. Our rulers were perhaps as well disposed to fleece the nation then as now, but not having had the means, it seems as if they had had more wit and better policy. By the latest calculation, it is estimated that the annual maintenance of every individual in England stands in 13l. a-head." "Then (Mr. Architrave) these six millions and a half, which, as you very justly observe, we are likely to lose, unless we can make a good peace, are equivalent, at the rate of 13l. a-head, to the maintenance of 500,000 people. Now, our Exchequer, for the payment of the interest of debts, annuities, and expenses of government, cannot dispense with less than

than a pound a-head from all the people in Britain ; but if the loss of the Colonies reduces 500,000 people to beggary, or obliges them to leave the kingdom, how will the Exchequer be able to bear the annual loss of their quota of a pound a-head, that is, of 500,000l. ? a loss equal to a debt of twelve millions and a half, at 4 per cent. for, as to the Exchequer, it makes no difference whether money is raised by duties, by excises, or on lands ; it can only be obtained in proportion to the number of consumers who inhabit, or use the products of that land ; therefore, whatever lessens the numbers of the consumers, must as effectually deduct from the receipt of the Exchequer, as if the money was to be raised by a pole tax. But on whom must this Exchequer loss fall ? Can it be taken out of the civil list ? No. Will the country gentlemen grant another shilling or two in the pound on land ? No. Will you sponge away twelve millions and a half from the funds, by way of a *coup d'essai* ? Or will you supply every deficiency with Bank bills ? Oh, happy expedient ! and so run the Bank bills against the paper money of the Congress, till we see who can stretch paper credit farthest, and blow the enemy up, as you did our Bank of Air ? Tremendous experiment ! But this leads to a new field of

of argument, and therefore I'll stop here." But (said Hortensius) though we have been shamefully inattentive hitherto, the incidents that are likely to open upon us every day during the continuance of this war, must excite people to examine the grounds of it, and the consequences likely to follow either victory or defeat ; for admitting that a million a year, bestowed in places and pensions, might be sufficient to keep 800 Lords and Commoners so quiet, as to stand mute, while the monarchy was raising to the level of those of France, Spain, Prussia, or Sweden, yet, can it be supposed, that plain country gentlemen, or rather farmers and plowmen, (who have no estates to forfeit for an unfortunate rebellion) will expect that the ransacking three or four millions of British people, whom they have been used to call their fellow-subjects, will lighten the burden on their own shoulders ; or that the same policy that cuts the throats of our American brethren, for the honour and dignity of the supreme power, may not bye and bye, in support of the same system, find it expedient to play the like game here." " This vagrant, unlocated idea, called *supreme power* (said the Scotch gentleman) which has no real station or existence, except what it derives from public opinion, has been often misconcieved, misunderstood, and sadly mismanaged,

managed; in this country before now. Charles the First thought he had a clear right to it, and lost his head in contending for the honour and dignity of it. James the Second thought he had it, but finding his mistake, not quite too late, had time to run away with his head on his shoulders. Neither of these *dignity-mongers* had revenue enough, or posts sufficient, to secure a majority of Lords and Commons for sixteen successive years, wanting those wealthy resources that have since flowed from Colony trade. Now, some other people, on a plan of confederacy, think they have got this mysterious gift of supreme power, and possess it as infallibly as, some centuries ago, the Pope did his supremacy over all the Princes of Europe. But though King John was a beast of burden, that groaned and submitted to the load, Harry the Eighth, with the good liking of his people, broke the bridle, and threw the wanton rider, who reasoning like a rash groom, thought a man might at all events be stronger than a horse; or a proud individual, by artful imposition, be more powerful than a whole people. Many examples in history have shewn us, that nations may be found very tractable, gentle, and useful, as the generous steed, chearfully submitting to their rulers, whilst they find them using their superintendance with moderation,
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and apparently for their good. But when Mr. Groom cuts the good beast short of his allowance, and capriciously lords it over him with whip and spur, till his courage and resentment are thoroughly roused, the groom or ruler may find his error when it will be too late to correct it. The general dislike for this ruinous civil war, is notorious from this circumstance, that the fleet and army are obliged to be recruited with *convict felons*." "I hope (said Hortensius) this evil, as it is really a desperate one, cannot last much longer. Things are now come to such a crisis, that it is of little use to look back, except for the purpose of knowing what enormities we should guard against in future, some of which appear so plainly now, that one cannot help wondering at the blind stupidity of a people who could be guilty of such errors, notwithstanding their intention of keeping a watchful and jealous eye on the conduct of their chief magistrates, whose insatiable ambition is evermore exciting them to raise their power into despotism. King William the Third, who was bred a soldier, thought of no way of arriving at his point, but by an army of his countrymen. The people of England being of a like opinion, mortified him to the utmost degree, by not permitting him to keep even his Dutch guards, on the maxim of "*principiis obsta*,"

Ha, knip the evil in the bud." Their sons, of narrow view, in indolent imitation of their fathers, have ever since grumbled for form sake, against standing armies, but have basely suffered the Crown revenue to be increased, till it can pension a majority of their trustees, can hire an army of foreigners without consulting them, and order their pensioners to vote their legality afterwards."

During this discourse Mr. Pounce, who had for the most part held a private conversation with a gentleman on his right hand, and had also, in fellowship with him, tossed off many bumpers, now halloo'd out, "Success to his Majesty's arms, and d—n all rebels!—d—n all rebels!—eh! Mr. Architrave!" at the same time stretching out his left arm to clap Architrave on the shoulder, he lost his balance, fell off his chair, and catching by Architrave, pulls him down along with him, and both rolled, bellowing, under the table; upon which his bottle friend stammered out "Zounds, this is a da—da—n'd bad omen! the champion o'th' Exchequer has dropt off his perch; and oh, woe to the new buildings! Architrave follows him in his downfall!—A d—, dam, dam bad omen!"

I, having an utter aversion to drunken jokes, took the opportunity of this confusion to make my retreat.

The West-India Merchant.

NUMBER XXI.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R, Herefordshire, Sept. 5, 1776.

Y O U seem to be a well-meaning sort of a man, and therefore ought to be set right. Let me then tell you, you and your correspondents are taking a great deal of trouble to no purpose. You thresh in your cloaks. You want, forsooth, to make the nation believe, and particularly squint at us country gentlemen, that the war with America will ruin the West Indies in the first place, and Old England in the next. It may be so, or it may not be so, for aught I know. But you see plainly the nation does not mind you; and believe me the country gentlemen are intent upon what they think their own business, or their pleasures, without giving themselves any concern about you or your prophecies. What signifies all the noise you make about the land-tax and poor rates? My estates are lett, clear of all deductions whatsoever. So much for Old England. As to the West-Indies, I am sorry to hear that any of their sugars should be taken. But that is a misfortune not to be helped. Our men of war are all busy in protecting the army that is gone to conquer America; and even that, you know, is more than they

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can do, as several of the transports have been pick'd up notwithstanding. No wonder then the rebels, for act of parliament rebels they are for certain, should lay hold of some of your ships. However, we are now to hope, that one year more at farthest will put an end to your danger; and may humming crops for many years make you amends for your losses.

I could say a great deal more upon this matter, but I cannot spare time from the partridges. You will do as well to give more of your time to the counting house, and let us leave the business of the nation to his Majesty's Ministers.

I am, your humble servant,

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Westminster, Sept. 4, 1776.

THE love of one's country, however sacrificed by the individual, in particular instances, to interest or ambition, is a ruling principle in every nation. The same spirit prevails in every division and subdivision of the people towards the fellow members of such respective class or society. You see it, not only in the soldier and the gownsmen, in the liberal professions and the mechanical arts, but it condescends to spread its influence through the club and alehouse.

alehouse. It is the affection of the component parts towards the aggregate whole; a sort of brotherly kindness, which penetrates like the rust, into the heart of a *placeman*, and gives him a strong bias in favour of his companions in office.

Do not reject, Sir, in surprise, the correspondence of a *placeman*! He is, in secret, a sincere well wisher to your cause. The American war is as destructive to his fraternity, as it is to your friends. He sees the perquisites of many a post most miserably curtailed. He knows of a match broke off, because the gentleman's income was found to be half the value he had set forth. It had been estimated honestly at the old rate; but the American war broke out, blemished his character, hurt his fortune, and robbed him of his mistress.

But this is not all the mischief to our body from the American war. A great number of employments, from the highest value to the lowest, are upon the point of being annihilated for ever. If the Congress make good their pretensions to independency, and they appear to act with a confidence of success, farewell to all the posts and places in the North-American department! from the Princely Governor in his palace, to the humble waiter upon the quays at the Custom-house, they may take a final leave of that continent. The

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Honourable the Commissioners of the Customs, having nothing to collect, are already returned to England, with their books and their balances. Their Excellencies the Governors, having nobody to govern, are embarked, and ready to follow.

The long train must be provided for at home. I am secure in a patent place for life; but it grieves me to think, how many of the brotherhood must ride double, or lie two in a bed.

We placemen, Sir, must have a degree of interest in one shape or another. We could not have been placemen without it; and we are esteemed as fast friends to administration. You ought to have called upon us to assist you; not indeed as petitioners for peace to King or Parliament, that would have been too slippery a step; but we and our patrons could have done much good in our own way, by personal suggestions and private remonstrances. Your party too were sensible of our consequence. In reckoning up the benefits of the sugar colonies to the mother country, you tell the House of Commons, quaintly enough putting it indeed, of "the salaries and profits of the officers appointed by government for the superintendence of the West-Indies:" Nevertheless, you have taken no notice of us.

I have

I have it from authority, that the Secretary of State for America, has places at his disposal to the amount of 75,000l. a year. The Treasury has not less. Suppose them, at a venture, equally divided between the continent and the islands! this will shew our people how much we have lost; but let us look at what we have lost, only as a measure to estimate how much remains; how much there is still in jeopardy, to perish or to be preserved. Let us then endeavour to hinder the Ministers from throwing the helve after the hatchet; let every man of us diligently, altho' covertly, like the mole under ground, go to work immediately, to bring about such a peace with the continent, as may save us the islands.

I remain, Sir, your humble servant,

A PLACEMAN.

I MUST beg leave to inform the *Country Gentleman*, that I never troubled myself about the affairs of the nation, till the untoward management of them so disordered the business of my counting house, that I was compelled to look into the public cause of my private injury, for which I made my apology in my first letter (London Evening, January 9.) But though this gentleman exults in his own safety,
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having lett his estate for a neat rent, clear of all taxes and poor's rates, let me tell him, if from his partridges he can spare a little time for reflection, that notwithstanding he has seemingly *insured* his income, yet if the times turn too hard for his farmers, who in this *insurance* are his *underwriters*, his parchment security will be of little avail; and he must then come to feel in his turn, a share of that calamity, which does now, in the first instance, fall on my correspondents the Sugar Colonists:

My friend the *Placeman* will see I do not reject his correspondence; I think we have been favoured with letters from two or three of his fraternity before. But admitting it may be as natural for a placeman, as for any other inhabitant, when the house is in flames, to cry out, *fire! fire!* yet I could wish to see these gentlemen put their hands sincerely to the buckets, and to the engines that are to extinguish it; for though they might not have intended, or have expected, the mischief should have spread so far as it has done, it was certainly through the means of their venality, that our incendiaries were supplied with the combustible matter from which the conflagration is raised.

The West-India Merchant.

A CARD

A CARD to Y Z.

New Lloyd's, Sept. 7, 1776.

THE West-India Merchant returns compliments to Y. Z. thanks him for the communication of his project of a new theatrical entertainment for the army in America; but having little skill in such matters, recommends him rather to advise with the facetious Mr. Foote, whether to entitle his little piece, *Harlequin General*, or *Harlequin Admiral*; thinks, however, a *coup-de-main*, after nineteen days, is too *outrè*, even in farce.—Let him ask *Horace*.

NUMBER XXII.

Mr. Miller,

Lloyd's, Sept. 24, 1776.

THE fine weather of last Sunday induced me to take another repast with my friend *Hortensius*, where I arrived some minutes before any other company. He reproached me gently for slipping away so abruptly the last time, as he wished to have made me better acquainted with his Scotch friend, Captain Fl——r, and asked me how I liked him? I said, “very much indeed, for in these times it is rare to find such sentiments in gentlemen of that country.” “Oh, (said he) when the sun
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shines only on Tories, you must not expect to see many Scotch Whigs about Court ; however, I am glad you are pleased with him, and that you are come here to-day, for I expect him at dinner." Soon after several other gentlemen dropped in, and among them Captain F——r. Dinner was announced ; we were near a dozen at table ; and when the cloth was removed, a short time passed over in separate conversations at different parts of the table, till some observations on the last news from America seemed gradually to engage the general attention. " Be that as it may (said a grave looking old gentleman) I am heartily sorry that our arms have been foiled at this paltry and ill-judged attack *; the disgrace of it will be added to, what many people call the iniquity of the cause ; and which, especially if we continue to be unfortunate in our military operations, will brand our nation with eternal infamy !" — " I see no just cause for that, (said Captain F——) it is no disgrace to British arms, to be foiled by British arms ; nor does it lay the brand of inhumanity and infamy on the whole British nation, because such iniquitous measures have been, and are pursued by a *Junto*. The British nation is not confined to the purlieus of Westminster, nor even to this island, though the most profligate and corrupt part of it

* The miscarriage of the attempt on CHARLESTOWN, S. Carolina.

resides here, and is often to be found collected in one corner of the capital. The public opinion repeated daily in all parts of the kingdom, both *vivâ voce*, and in print, the record of which will reach the rest of the world, and pass to posterity, shews, that these wicked and detested measures are the projects of a few foolish knaves, unhappily in possession of *ways and means* sufficient to bribe a majority of the *formal part* of our governing powers; and though it is well known, that the numbers of these efficient *formal* rulers, who, under the influence of bribery, have brought us into this dilemma, are not above five hundred persons, yet the great majority of upwards of five millions of men, being only the *materials* of power without *form*, and who, as far as they entertain any opinion at all, are of a contrary one; have no other remedy to take, than the *ratio ultima*; which indeed, though it has seldom failed to palliate, if not to cure, is a dreadful remedy, and therefore not ventured upon above once or twice in a century."

While the Captain was in this discourse, I observed the greatest part of the company (to whom he was unknown) seized with wonder to hear such doctrine from a *Scotchman*; and I heard some of them whisper their astonishment on that head to their next neighbours. "But, Captain

(said Hortensius) though the American part of the British nation have applied to the *ratio ultima*, I apprehend there is no great danger of our using that tremendous remedy here.”—“ Ah, my friend, (said the Captain) *hinc illæ lachrymæ!* there was a time, when having this remedy always at hand, we prevented the growth of the disease. A learned kinsman of mine delivered his sentiments on this head very clearly, when things were beginning to go wrong about the end of the last century *. “ *I think (said he) no limitation on the power of Princes so essential to the liberties of the people, as that which places the sword in the hands of the subject: Where it is otherwise, the monarchy becomes tyranny; nor can the power of granting or refusing money, though vested in the subject, be a sufficient security for liberty, where a standing mercenary army is kept up in time of peace; FOR HE THAT IS ARMED, IS ALWAYS MASTER OF THE PURSE OF HIM THAT IS UNARMED.*”—“ But, Captain (said the old gentleman) is it not equally true, what a kinsman of mine wrote also somewhat earlier in the last century. that † *Power follows Property*; for, assuredly, he who is master of the purse, will always be able at his pleasure to hire a band of armed bullies.”—“ I do (an-

* Fletcher's Political Works.

† Harrington's Oceana.

swered the Captain) readily admit, that both propositions are, or may be occasionally true; that is, *the purse may engage the sword*, and *the sword may command the purse*; against which dangerous powers, either separate or united, in the hands of a weak or wicked Prince, there is only one antidote, and that depends more on chance than on human prudence.”—“ And pray, (said the old gentleman) what may that be? for where both *purse and sword* are in one hand, I conceive it will be next to impossible to cure the evils that may flow from such a conjunction; but if a people keep the power of the purse in their own hands, may they not force the Prince to disband the army for want of pay?”—“ Sir, (said the Captain) I believe we shall hardly be able to produce any instance where the people, though apparently holding the purse, but having indulged the Prince with the habitual command of an army, have ever been afterwards able to deny him either the one or the other, unless fortune furnishes them with the antidote I have mentioned; that is, the opposition of an universal *public opinion*; for, as my kinsman has further remarked, “ *If a standing army is once established under a prudent Prince, who may have been discreet and moderate in the use of them, they will be able to continue themselves under any* FOOLISH PRINCE,

PRINCE, and ready to commit any violence he may set them upon; for, as their existence and preferment depends on his favour, THEY MUST DO ALL HIS WORK, OR STARVE."

* A celebrated general officer has lately confirmed the justice of this prophetic sentiment, when making an apologetical profession of his active and passive principles to Parliament, and separating the soldier from the patriot, he said, he quieted his conscience for taking up arms in this civil war, by leaving the cause of it to be settled between God and his Prince."—"Sir, (said the old gentleman) your antidote, *public opinion*, I allow, is a powerful one, when it can be administered; but very rarely, I am afraid, impossible to be had as often as it is wanted. It is true indeed, though James the Second had by good œconomy created both a purse and an army, yet, I believe, *public opinion* contributed a great deal towards making them both useless; for, in the end, the army mouldered away without fighting. But what effect has *public opinion* had since that event? To how many squadrons of cavalry and battalions of infantry and artillery, has our peace establishment been raised since the peace of Ryswick? It is nearly doubled within my own remembrance; that is, since the Hanover accession. And, Sir, during all that time, your antidote, *public opinion*,

* See Parliamentary Register, Vol. I. Page 252.

opinion, has, from dozing at first, fallen of late years into so sound a sleep, that I think it will never awake to any good purpose in my time.”—“ Mr. Harrington, (said Hortensius) don’t despair ; though it has been the will of Heaven to send all our hostile invasions, plagues, and noxious weather from the Eastward, yet, on the other hand, it has waisted us vigorous health, and many solid comforts on Western gales, and more may still come to us from that quarter, notwithstanding the present dark prospect: Let us acknowledge, that the kindness we shewed the distressed Hollanders, when groaning under the tyranny of Philip the Second, was in some measure requited by their adding strength to that *public opinion*, which relieved us from the intended tyranny of an obstinate fool. Our countrymen in America seem determined to keep both *sword* and *purse* in their own power. *Public opinion* appears to be broad awake there, and stemming the torrent of oppression at the first gush. Precepts in theory, we all know, have seldom much effect on human conduct, either private or public, but are very convincing when joined with recent examples. I say, Captain, let us look to the westward ; if we have fostered our countrymen in America, in their days of feebleness, why may we not expect some kind return from them, according to their abilities ?

abilities? They will not, I trust, be less grateful to us than Dutchmen. Perhaps they may teach us to be more virtuous and more happy! Perhaps they may furnish us with the means! Perhaps their vigorous admonitions may excite, in the hearts of our rulers, some latent sentiments of prudence and moderation, which may open a way to our amendment, for I should hope our case is not yet beyond a remedy." — I doubt that (said Mr. Harrington) unless it be such as may arise from a convulsion; for the blood-thirsty addresses of the contractors and ministerial hirelings, having been graciously accepted and blazoned forth in the Gazettes, while the petitions and remonstrances for peace, and a change of measures were disregarded and industriously suppressed, has thrown a silent gloom over the minds of all honest men; so that, I apprehend, folly is now left at full liberty to range without controul."---" Well. is not this (said Hortensius) is not this the exact copy of what was practised by that wise Prince, James the Second? If such *smuggled addresses* could be depended on as the true expression of *public opinion*, he should have been perfectly safe in his measures; but after such a notable instance of ill success, is it not wonderful to see such a paltry artifice relied on, in the same country, a second time?"---" But pray, (said Mr.

Mr. Harrington) what grounds are there for the reports we hear of a *Provincial fleet* engaging a squadron of our ships of war in the West-Indies; and what are we to think of the appearance of their privateers off Lisbon, and perhaps in the Channel; and of a fleet of line of battle ships, which, they say, they are preparing for next spring?---“ Oh, (said the Captain) a little time must clear up whatever is now in doubt; but give me leave, Mr. Harrington, to ask you (as you seem to question the power and efficacy of my antidote) what effect do you suppose Admiral Hopkins's squadron would have on *public opinion*, if it was now, in conjunction with some European ally, hovering on our coast?”

Harrington. “ Why, perhaps, the same as the Prince of Orange's squadron had, when it anchored in Torbay.”

Captain. “ And what do you say that was?”

Harrington. “ Why, truly, I agree with what Hortensius has said just now, it gave strength to *public opinion*; its immediate effect was, that it prevented a great deal of bloodshed, by bringing King James very soon into the same opinion with the majority of his subjects, THAT HE WAS NO LONGER FIT TO GOVERN THEM; and under that persuasion, he very peaceably took himself

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away. And however some people lamented his obstinate bigotry and blindness, which prevented him from foreseeing his danger, and changing his measures before it was too late; (as I am persuaded AN ENTERPRISING FOOL CAN NEVER BE MATERIALLY MENDED) I think it was a great happiness for the nation, that his blind obstinacy was persisted in, till his condition was irretrievable."

"Mr. Harrington (said the Captain) I thank you, you have answered me very candidly; and on my part, I must acknowledge, that as James had collected a mercenary army, *public opinion* alone, without the appearance of the Dutch fleet, might not have made so sudden and so happy a Revolution!"

Here, Mr. Miller, I must interrupt my narrative of this conversation; perhaps I may give you the remainder hereafter; at present I can only spare time to write a line or two in answer to the inclosed letter.

TO the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Canterbury, Sept. 22, 1776.

As you seem to be engaged in a good cause, and I doubt not with an honest intention, I am sorry to disturb you with a remark that may put you out of humour with yourself; but unless you can mend your hand, I think you may as well desist, and leave room for a more vigorous champion.

champion. Your fine spun fancy, of attacking measures instead of men, is no better than cutting flourishes on the air; for if you really expect to be read, and to keep your readers awake, you must, instead of cutting and flashing measures, cut and slash the individuals who are the authors of those measures. I remember, when I was a boy, prize fighting was still in vogue; then it was, that Englishmen were taught courage by ocular demonstration; and well also do I remember, that we were never amused or satisfied, unless we had blood for our money. Take this hint, my good fellow, and let me see you lay about you like a man in earnest; cut me out the bowels of a Bute, or if any one presumes to stand before him, be he who he will, cut him up too, and shew us his name in black letters; else, upon my word, I shall no longer be at the expence of your *bum-drum*, while I can be as effectually put to sleep by *Heylin's Cosmography*, *Stow's Chronicle*, or *Robinson Crusoe*.

Your's,

OLIVER KNOBSTICK.

I readily agree with Mr. Knobstick, that if my papers were more frequently seasoned with personal satire, they would appear more brilliant, and be more entertaining

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to all those who read chiefly for their amusement. But this has been very completely done by geniusses of the first class ; and to what end ! The same system of impolitic and unpopular measures have been pursued without interruption. I do not see any probability of finding, *among us*, a set of heroes likely to be moved, even by a JUNIUS, to rise up, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, in order to wrest power out of the hands that hold it under the influence of the *national purse*, and the protection of a *standing army* ; nor do I know, that among all those, whose ranks, fortunes, and qualifications, entitle them to stand forward, there are twenty men at this time to be found, who are likely to agree in any one honest and well digested plan ; therefore, being myself only an humble man of business, my design, and my wish, as an occasional writer, is no more than to keep open a mode of communication, whereby my friends, and all real patriots, by meeting points, may warn each other, and those who either are now in, or may hereafter come into power, against approaching dangers ; and likewise, if possible, collect from their advice, some sound political principles, whereby such dangers may be avoided.

A predilection for *self* occupies too great a portion of the human heart, to suffer
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the generality of men *to do as they would be done by*; and this selfish sentiment of the individual, lays the foundation for the selfish principle of a whole nation. Wherever this selfish sentiment or principle predominates, it is surely a vice; and I may venture to say, this vice is the chief, if not sole cause of the origin and continuance of that rash conduct, which has given a fatal shock to the united interests, the strength, and the prosperity of this empire, and even now threatens its dissolution.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R X X I I I .

Mr. Miller,

18th Oct. 1776.

IN my letter of the 24th ult. (See London Evening, October 8.) I gave you some expectation of continuing my account of the table conversation the last time I dined with my friend Hortensius.

I remember I left off, just when the servant brought in the coffee.---“ Gentlemen, said Hortensius, don't be disturbed at the appearance of the coffee so early; it need not interrupt, or interdict the rites of Bacchus; to those who prefer the juice of the grape to this *Lacedemonian broth*; but
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I promised my old friend, Mr. Crawford, (who, by living long abroad, has acquired some habits, not easily dispensed with at his time of life) to indulge him with it, in his own way, without moving him from the conversation of the table."---" Bless me, said Capt. F——r, is that my old friend Mr. Crawford? I am heartily glad to see you."

Crawf. Yes, Johnny, it is your old friend, who has been very attentive to your discourse; but, by your not finding me out sooner, I suspect that eighteen years have made a considerable alteration in my figure; while you look so fresh and so young, that I kenne'd you perfectly by your countenance as well as by your language and your sentiments; for I find the notions infused into you from your infancy, by your mad Whig uncle, stick by you still.

Capt. I am glad you do not suspect me to have lost either my honesty or my understanding.

Crawf. No, no, Johnny, I perceive you are just as wild in your politics as you were, when I found you among the Dutch Patriots at Amsterdam, fomenting a revolution in favour of the Prince of Orange, and exhorting them to take that opportunity of reviving their ancient militia laws, never to trust the defence of their liberties to any arms but their own, and in their
military

military capacity to elect, according to ancient right, all their magistrates, as well as their militia officers, annually. Do you remember that, Johnny?

Capt. Yes, my old friend, I remember it very well; and often have I lamented, since I saw, in the fundamental rights of the Dutch, the German and the Swiss Republics, so much of the original principles of our own *regal commonwealth*; I say, often have I lamented, that the ignorance, the indolence, and, I may add, the base and ill-advised avarice of Britons, had suffered the standing defence of their country, their laws, and their liberties, to be transferred from their own arms, to those of mercenaries; so that, in respect of any power to assert their constitutional rights, if an important occasion should require it, the bravest spirits in the nation are almost as insignificant as women. In the *South*, there is, indeed, the name of a militia; but lest it should have either credit or authority, it is by law, in every rank, made inferior, and to be commanded by the mercenaries. Could a greater affront be put on a nation, who call themselves freemen, and where the *Prince* is legally the *servant* and PENSIONER of the people, than that the *armed slaves*, or mercenaries, of that PENSIONER, should command over the militia of armed freemen, serving in
their

their own persons, and at their own expence? But it is singularly unfortunate for the credit of modern learning, that while Europe is becoming more enlightened, systems for rooting out the remains of civil liberty, in order to reduce mankind to slavery under eight or nine despotic heads, are formed by those very geniusses, whose improved talents should be employed to advance the reign of freedom and philosophy! But behold the British Americans!

Crawf. Hoot away, mon! Do not talk any mair of those filthy rebles, that have made all this mischief, without any just cause or provocation!

Capt. My dear friend, those poor people never disputed the high superintending authority of the metropolitan councils, while that authority made itself respectable; while it was supported by fair, constitutional argument, and while its requisitions and injunctions, equitably framed, were transmitted to them in *pen* and *ink* only. But when the *four parent* sent her orders with *bullet* and *bayonet*; when two paltry regiments were sent to irritate Boston, and to teach those peaceable peasants to know their own strength! it was those measures, those fatal measures then, that provoked rebellion!---*Hostilis facies occurrit, et omnia turbat!*---But even then, what did they more than weary us, year after year, with hum-

humble petitions, complaining of the infringements of rights established by usage of above an hundred and fifty years, of abolishing and breaking through their charters? To these petitions, what answer did the *Alma Mater* give?---Was it delivered by the musketry, at Lexington---from the mouths of cannon at Bunker's-hill,---or was it consumed in the flames of Charles-Town?—*Quis talia fando, temperet!*—

Arma, viri, ferte arma—————

—————*Nunquam omnes moriemur inulti!*

And can any man, who has heard these facts, call this an unprovoked rebellion? But especially, my friend, can it be prudent in us Scotchmen, who, under the act or charter of union, enjoy all the commercial benefits of Englishmen, while our small proportion of taxation may fairly be called an exemption? I say, is it prudent in Scotchmen to cry up this new-fashioned doctrine of supreme parliamentary power, of breaking up and destroying old foundations, charters, and ancient usages? Let us remember that sagacious warning of our James the Sixth, and not be so forward in *making a rod*, that may, by and bye, be employed to *whip ourselves!* If this new-fangled supremacy may be applauded for trampling on *privileges*, sanctified by usage of 150 years, what security can we have

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for the *articles of our union*, not yet seventy years old? For in case they should be attacked, and that we should pretend to dispute the right, might not the Hessians and Brunswickers be called in, under the *formal propriety of precedent*, to be the arbitrators of the difference between us?

Crawf. D——n the Hessians and Brunswickers, what should they have to do with our laws!

Capt. My dear friend, let us not be deluded and entrapped by the slavish catechisms of placemen and pensioners; for, as I believe, it could easily be proved, that a hungry Exchequer might profit more by a parliamentary reform in our articles of union (now since the extension of commerce and luxury in our country) than by the most compleat conquest of America; to which might be added, plausible reasons to shew, that the present articles are not beneficial to the community at large though the indulgencies enjoyed under them, have been very advantageous and lucrative to particulars, among whom none have had a better share than your family—I say, let us be cautious, lest the American project of finance failing, we bring the storm on our own heads; for all the Tory arguments, though rotten and fallacious, as applied to *unrepresented* America, will be sound and irrefragable when used
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against us. And I am sorry to say, as too many of our countrymen have indecently countenanced the measure of overturning the chartered rights of America, we could expect neither favour nor compassion from others, if we should fall under a like oppression.

Crawf. Hoot, man, do you mind what you are saying? Do you make no difference between a paltry charter, and the most solemn act of Parliament, upon the faith of which our union stands?

Capt. Yes indeed, cozen, I acknowledge the legal difference to be very great; for every legal *charter* is irrevocably valid against the *grantor*, whilst the grantees perform all the duties and conditions prescribed in the grant. But an act of Parliament, be it ever so solemn, can never prevent the next Parliament, or even the next session, from repealing, or altering it, at their pleasure.

Crawf. The devil's in you, Johnny, for an obstinate casuist; you were always too many for me in argument, ever since you were twelve years old. But what would you have us to do with these d---d rebels? For, as my friend Will. Murray said, *It is no matter how the dispute began, they are now our bitter enemies, and we must subdue them, or they will subdue us!*

Capt. Oh, Mr. Crawford, you talk of my casuistry; but this is such casuistry, as dare not look justice in the face! Surely, cozen, your friendship with Will Murray is of late date, you did not own or affect it in former days; nor would the principles you then professed, allow you to applaud acts of injustice, because they were inflicted, and might be maintained by the hand of power.

Crawf. By my faul, Johnny, you are very teasing: I say, things being as they now are, what would you have us to do?

Capt. Make peace.

Crawf. Well then; and for what else have we sent an army there, but to *make peace* as it ought to be, *sword in hand*!

Capt. "Make peace, sword in hand!"-- My good cozen, I know this to be the language of your new friends, and delivered as a maxim, on which they think the world must applaud their wisdom and their bravery. But what can give a more distinguishing mark of foolish conduct, than the misapplication of maxims, and mistaking special for general rules. War between independent Princes or States, may well be carried on, till peace can be compelled, *sword in hand*; because the primitive condition of the parties was admitted to be equally independent of each other; nor did the declaration of war alter that independent-

dependency. But in a *civil war*, the primitive condition being unequal, the one superior, the other (by legal compact) dependent, the instant the sword is drawn, the inequality is suspended, and they must remain on terms of independency, while ever the war is continued; and if the revolters, either from their numbers, their situation, or other causes, are so strong as to make the issue of the contest doubtful, it will be manifestly their interest to adopt the maxim of *making peace sword in hand*; because so long as the sword is unsheathed, so long are they independent, and in a situation the most likely to obtain a peace on advantageous terms: but it is absolutely the reverse for that party who hope to recover their former sovereignty, with the affections of their subjects; because this method can never procure peace for them, except either by renouncing their sovereignty, or by an absolute conquest over subjects, unconditionally at their mercy, who will never forgive the injury, and who will consequently revolt on the first occasion.

Crawf. Well, Johnny, what would you be at now? If you won't let us *make peace sword in hand*, would you have us purchase a peace by our submission, and so become their subjects, instead of their being subjects to us?

Capt.

Capt. My good friend, can you see no middle way between those two extremes? But give me leave to ask you, have you ever taken the trouble to examine accurately what you mean when you say, *our subjects*, and *subject to us*? Suppose the conquest, we aim at, was now compleated, and the abject state of the conquered, settled under the irresistible compulsion of a military government; the expence of which, all circumstances considered, would certainly exceed any revenue that could be raised on them; what share of this sovereignty would you feel *yourself* possessed of, what benefit could you, as a *British landlord*, derive from such a conquest, and such a consequent subjection, or could you, supposing you were forty years younger, with your fortune in money, be induced to go and live under it?

Crawf. No certainly; and I own, when I said *our subjects*, I only followed the vulgar phrase, without any more distinct idea, than that of being in the same degree of subjection under the same laws with ourselves: But you have opened my mind to a different view of their condition. However, let us defer the discussion of this point till another time; and only tell me now, how you think this unhappy difference may be composed; for really in its present state, the difficulty, of making any good end of it, seems almost insurmountable.

able. And tell us also whether you don't think it the interest of the rebels to make an early submission, which may obtain them better terms than they can hope for by a longer resistance; as in the nature of things, they, who are only a *raw, undisciplined, ill armed, and inexperienced rabble*, must be conquered at last, by so great a force as we employ against them.

Capt. My dear friend, I shall endeavour to answer you, to the best of my judgment. In the first place, we must not consider a civil war, such as this is, between a sovereign state, asserting its unlimited power, on one side, and a great revolted nation at 3000 miles distance, on the other, complaining of unredressed wrongs, and endeavouring to emancipate themselves from what they think slavery; I say, we must not consider such a civil war, as being of the same nature with a war between any two sovereign powers, or Princes, for in this latter case, the quarrel, or cause of the war, being most commonly derived from the ambition, or resentments of the Princes, or their ministers, while their civil subjects, (unaffected by the cause, but aggrieved with the expences attending it) are generally wishing for peace; it so happens, that when the army, on one side or the other, is totally routed or well beaten, the *vanquished Prince*, becoming

coming more *bumble*, and more *reasonable*, obtains a peace as well as he can; but still remains a King; for whatever the peace costs, the poor subjects must pay it; *Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi!* But in such a civil contention as I have described, the war on the part of the Prince, *grievous* to, and even *detested* by his peaceable subjects, (who are allied in blood, and connected in interests with the revolvers,) being carried on merely by his creatures and a *mercenary army*, when that is beaten, there is generally an end of his cause and his sovereignty over the revolted people, at least until he can send a new army, if he can be able so to do; on the other hand, the revolted nation, contending, not for *dominion* over others, but to *preserve* themselves from what they term *slavery*, (a cause that interests every individual in the quarrel,) depend not on the scanty numbers of a mercenary army, but extend their muster roll to the whole of their nation, acquiring *discipline* and *experience* from time; so that the loss of a battle, or of an army, (especially in an extensive country) is not the loss of their cause, which, affecting the whole, will still be maintained by the whole, and defended to the last man; and new armies, like the heads of the Hydra, will spring up in succession, as fast as they are cut off. The histories of the revolted

Swift

Swiss and Dutch, and their successful establishments as independent commonwealths, give us such clear and well attested examples in support of this opinion, that I think I need say no more on that head, except to observe, that such rebellions are very different, both in their nature and consequences, from that absurd one which happened in our country in 1745; for being raised under the standard of a Pretender, it met with no countenance or support, except that of a few deluded visionaries; but, on the contrary, was detested by all wise and honest men; who were no way inclined to reprobate their popular privilege of electing their chief magistrate, by exchanging a moderate ruler for an adventurer, who impudently claimed a title to the crown by *divine right*.

Crawf. Well, Johnny, but still the grand difficulty remains; how will you make up the quarrel?

Capt. In truth, that is a difficulty! If they, who have hurried us into, and managed, this war hitherto, could condescend to acknowledge, that they are now in a temper to pursue the measures that were recommended, and to offer such terms as would have been accepted a year ago, they might perhaps find out that the losses we have suffered, and the waste of treasure, during that unfortunate period, were en-

tirely owing, either to their ill-timed pride, and their blindness in not seeing things in their obvious light, or to their obstinacy in pursuing such hopeless and ruinous measures; therefore, in order to know what they had best do now, I would advise them to form their judgment of the future, from the experience of the past, and to assure themselves, that in all human probability, events of much more alarming importance will be brought on the stage, during the acting of this war, henceforward, with a catastrophe that may involve the greatest among them; but which, a well timed humility and moderation may yet, perhaps, avert.

Crawf. By my soul, Johnny, you are talking as if you were gifted with the second sight!

Capt. No, my friend, I boast no supernatural gift; but he must be very short sighted, who does not perceive it is both the interest and the inclination of our rivals to maintain the independency of America, and to prevent any friendly reconciliation between us; thereby to cut us off from that source of wealth and power, by means of which, we baffled the designs of the family compact last war, and humbled the pride of the greatest powers in Europe.

Crawf. Well, but Johnny, admitting the justice of all your reasoning, how are we

we to arrive at the desirable point, how make the peace?

Capt. By adopting a measure agreeable to the prudent counsel of the old *Samnite*, *Herennius*; by treating the Colonists with kindness and humanity, if we mean to secure the friendship of a people, who now appear to be a great and powerful nation; though, not having yet got them into the *Caudine Forks*, it is not in our power to adopt his alternative, of putting them all to death. To be plain, I think, the first good step, and the best we can now make, is still to adopt the advice of the *British Herennius*, Lord Chatham, WITHDRAW THE TROOPS; it is the only means we have left, to gain their confidence, and to persuade them we intend to treat with them equitably and sincerely. By those who have not elevation of mind sufficient to overcome the little pride of self conceit, this advice may yet be treated with the same contempt as it was when first offered; tho' I suppose, there are few, now, who do not see, that, had it been then adopted, it would have saved our honour, our blood, and our treasure; it would have prevented the effects of our folly, disgrace and misfortune! At present, we certainly have no other probable means of coming to an amicable league of perpetual friendship and brotherly compact; the general terms of

which can, now, hardly, be extended further to our advantage, than by admitting them to be as free and independent as ourselves, giving to the Americans in England, all the rights of an Englishman, and to an Englishman in any province of America, all the rights of an American; but, I apprehend, we must no longer think of interfering with their internal laws or finances, nor even with external regulations of trade, excepting such as may be settled by mutual compact; and under an accommodation on this simple ground, nothing, but the perplexed absurdity of our Custom House laws, could prevent us from enjoying a more beneficial commerce with America than ever we did before. I do not, however, expect this problem will be obviously clear to every one, as a demonstration in fact can not be given; till genius and honesty have the sole direction of the *Exchequer*; and in the mean while a demonstration in words would be tedious and useless. If pride and resentment should object to this plan of accommodation, as giving up too much; reason and moderation may answer, with wishing we could be sure that at this time we had, really, any thing to give; their best hopes of obtaining such good terms being in the remains of natural affection, which may still exist in our American brethren, if we make haste to cherish it,

it, before it is turned into another channel. Proverbs are vulgar expressions, but as they are the select offspring of common sense, I will venture to quote one ; for what can more aptly characterise our present condition than the old adage of GRASP ALL, LOSE ALL !

Crawf. Well, well ! Johnny, but, perhaps, things are not so bad with us yet as you seem to think !

Capt. Perhaps not, and I heartily hope not ; but surely we may rest in this opinion, that it will be better to endeavour to form a great, permanent regal commonwealth, than by aiming at despotism (over such immense tracts, which, if it could be established, would be impossible to maintain) to risk the loss of what may still be in our power, together with the ruin of the whole empire ! “ I am entirely of your opinion,” said *Hortensius*, “ but though the great persons who have the direction of these important affairs, are probably as humble, as moderate, and as knowing, now, as they should have been two years ago ; yet, I fear, they are still, at least, one year behind the necessary degree of humility, moderation, and knowledge, requisite on this great occasion ; and that they are likely so to continue, always a year too late in the disposition of mind, proper to bring this business to a happy conclusion, till all their

their efforts and all their efforts may be equally in vain!" Here every one was impatient to speak; a general approbation of the Captain's sentiments ensued, and even Crawford himself was brought over to them, owning candidly his remorse for having been gulled into an erroneous opinion by the artifice of a worthless fellow, and at length damned Will Murray, as a sophisticated, petty fogging old rascal, for having attempted to deceive and trepan him into his devilish *Tory Faction*.

The company rose, and I took my leave.

The West-India Merchant.

N U M B E R XXIV.

Mr. Miller,

Saturday, March 14, 1778.

I MUST trouble you once more, and for the last time, to give a general answer to many correspondents, whose favours I have not had leisure or spirits to attend to since October 1776, a dismal interval of seventeen months. The manifold distresses, consequences of the American war, which, about that time begun to accumulate on our West India planters, engrossed all my thoughts; for, although to view my profits on paper, they appeared to be higher than

than ever, yet, when I considered, that the plantations of my correspondents were the only funds from which I was to be repaid my continual and increasing advances ; that their effects were every day captured by the enraged Americans ; that their negroes were starving, or rebelling, for want of food, and that upon the whole, their expences, for sundry necessary articles, were now grown beyond their abilities to support, I thought it high time to withdraw myself from an undertaking, which, however fair it might seem upon paper, I had reason to fear, might turn out a losing game in the conclusion, especially if pushed any further. The result of this consideration was, to withdraw myself and my fortune from trade, and from my native country, and renouncing the seeming advantage of increasing my wealth, I deemed it most prudent, in these precarious times, to content myself with using my best means, in order to secure what, the balances on my books shewed me, I ought to have.

The conflict in my mind is now nearly over ; I have prepared every thing for my voyage ; and I have even recollected *my dream* without a shock. Let this be my apology to the bulk of my correspondents, whose letters having been on temporary subjects, and of no consequence now, I have committed to the flames. Of these follow-

following, received within a few days, I shall take more particular notice.

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R, King's arms, Cornhill, Feb. 25, 1778.

WITHOUT doubt, the *West-India Merchant*, in behalf of his correspondents, *the planters* (whose interests have been more effectually hurt by this *ministerial war*, than those of the *United States*) will be one of the foremost in signing the petition, now preparing to lay before Parliament*.

I am, Sir, your's,

VINDEX.

THE *West India Merchant* presents compliments to *Vindex*, and though no man wishes more than he does, for a sincere change of measures, and to render the success of those measures more probable, for an effectual change of men also; yet common prudence forbids him to brandish his feeble and naked arm, in the face of an unchained lion; and therefore, from a sense of his defenceless condition, the *West-India Merchant* is determined not to *fight*, but to *run*.

* A Petition to remove the Ministers.

To

To the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Lloyd's coffee-house, Feb. 27, 1778.

IT is notorious, that the West-India trade alone has lost above a *million sterling*, by captures, in less than two years; that our *merchant vessels* are now under a necessity of going to sea *without convoy*, because the navy of Great-Britain, exhausted by endeavouring to defend something called *dignity*, cannot spare ships to *protect* the national *commerce*; that the Ministers have secretly given to somebody an absolute *monopoly* of all the *run* in the West-Indies; that, conformable to order, the *Governors* of the Islands have published proclamations, forbidding all private traders to take any rum, on their own account, to sell to the navy or the army, or to any towns possessed by the King's forces in America, withdrawing and refusing their *licences* for that purpose, though contrary to the letter and spirit of an act of Parliament, in order to keep all that commodity for the *pre-emption* of the *contractors*; so that the planters, under the necessity of taking whatever these monopolists shall be pleased to offer, may expect to part with their rum this year, at about 300,000*l.* loss, to the immediate emolument of the *contractors and their friends*; which proceedings, I think, we

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may justly call making *war* on the *Sugar Colonies*, without a declaration. Nor can we doubt, whether the inhabitants of those islands will not shortly begin to deliberate on which hand they suffer most, by the *sword* of the *United States*, or by the *pen* of their mother's *Cabinet Council*?

What satisfaction has the public gained by the stir that was made concerning the rum contract of last year? If in the face of that representation, and even pending the sham enquiry, the same contract was again privately jobbed to the same persons, at the same rate; and, at the same time, this new scheme of the pre-emption is struck out, as if the simple contract was not sufficient; for it is not supposed, that Mr. A. and his friends have made much above one hundred and fifty thousand pounds by all his former jobs and contracts during this war, whereas this last lays the probable ground for making up the million.—But, Sir, perhaps I am very improperly addressing this to you; for, why has the West India Merchant been silent for more than a year past? Has he also felt the comfort of a contract?

I am, Sir, your's,

A PLANTER.

THE

THE *West-India Merchant* has only leisure to inform his correspondent, *the Planter*, that in his estimation, the general situation of public affairs is become too serious and alarming to attend to such trifles, as hundred thousands, or half millions, sacrificed to contractors. The *West-India Merchant* sees the whole fabric in most imminent danger, and the body of the state ready to fall into convulsions, uncertain whether the *paroxysm* will end in *dissolution* or *restoration*. He does not pretend to foretell, on what part the thunder of an invasion will fall, on Great-Britain, on Ireland, on the East, or on the West-Indies; but as he has engaged so much of his property on the security of the last, he thinks it material for his interest to convey himself thither by the first opportunity, not troubling his head much about convoy, or whether he arrives first in Dominica, or is conducted to Boston. The little regard shewn to *West India property*, on this side the Atlantic, gives him reason to suppose, our great men don't care whether those islands are preserved to this state, or pass to some other; therefore he wishes to be, either where his property lies, or in a place where he may negotiate with rational people concerning its preservation; and he thinks the *Planter* ought to be of the same opinion.

TO the WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

S I R,

Cocoa Tree, Feb. 28, 1778.

IS the *West-India Merchant* dead, or bankrupt, or silenced by a contract? We have heard nothing of him for near a year and an half. If none of these casualties have happened, let us hear from you once more. Many events have fallen out, pretty nearly such as you foretold; wherefore I could wish to see your scattered leaves collected into a pocket volume. I think your subjects will be better understood now, that we are near the end of the play, and the catastrophe coming on, than when you gave them; for according to the doctrine of your new acquaintance, Mr. Fl——r, *public opinion* is rapidly coming about; wherefore, I think, such a publication would be both useful and agreeable at this time, particularly for the peace-commiffioners, to read during their voyage; it would contribute to give them some notion of the real nature of the dispute we have had with our American brethren, and might induce them to entertain some tolerating and rational ideas of men, who prefer equity, common sense, and common honesty, to Court sense, *bonton*, and the arts of gamblers.

A KING'S FRIEND.

THE

THE *West-India Merchant* has the honour to acquaint his old correspondent, the *King's Friend*, that he is neither dead, bankrupt, nor *contractor*, in the odious modern sense; but to avoid a bankruptcy, he has thought it prudent to *contract* his sails, before the rage of the approaching storm should put that remedy out of his power. In plain language, he has disposed of his business to bolder undertakers than himself, and is on the point of departing from this country, perhaps never to return, as a *West-India Merchant*; for he owns, *Where his wealth is, there also is his heart*; and though he must ever grieve for the ruin of his native country, yet nature requires that he should, if possible, save himself from the wreck. *Public opinion*, it is true, is rapidly changing; but, alas! not till the *ship* has *struck*, and is entirely surrounded with *rocks and breakers*!

As to his scattered leaves, he has not the vanity to call himself an author, being only the compiler or collector of the opinions of other, and more able men than himself; however, he will carry them with him; they may be better understood and relished on the other side of the water, than in British Europe. They are too transatlantic, and too flat, for a sublime and elevated people, whose aspiring minds, unshackled by rigid rules, are nobly fascinated with whimsical titles of honour, dignified by
ribbands

ribbands and bespangled stars; otherwise, it cannot be doubted, but that *Mr. Miller* would readily gratify the desire of this worthy correspondent.

Mr. Miller, and gentle readers, adieu,
from your friend,

The West-India Merchant.

P. S. I have just received a note from 'Change-alley, seemingly written in great hurry and astonishment, to acquaint me, " that stocks are going all to ruin, and that the French Minister has officially notified the alliance of his master with the United States of America, and his acknowledgment of their independency."

This may overturn the whole system of the budget, and may make an entire new arrangement necessary at the Cockpit, where people chose not to see till they could feel; but it will make no alteration in my intended plan of retreat. This thunder storm has been clearly foreseen by myself and my friends for three years past, and many of us have felt it severely at sea for near two, though the warming influence of an affluent Exchequer has kept all the neighbourhood of St. James's and St. Stephen's, in a state of happy insensibility hitherto.

F I N I S.

AR Smith Sep. 15 1879 x44